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The Beaver

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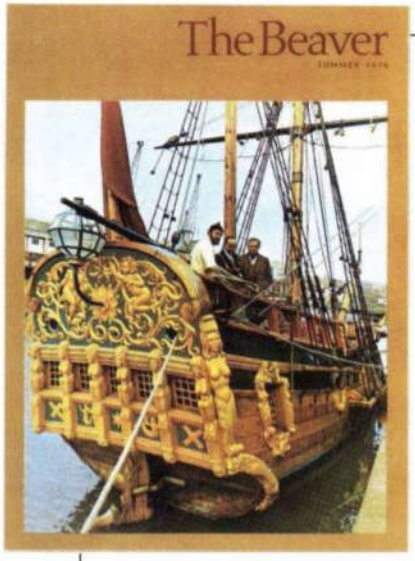
Mothers of Confederation

Montcalm's Last Battle

The Flight to Suburbia

Bronze sculpture "Maria Chapdelaine".
Engraving from "Picturesque Canada".



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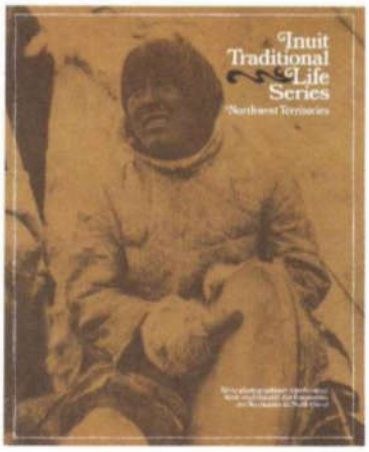

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The Price of Glory: Dieppe 1942

"Nothing except a battle lost can be half so melancholy as a battle won", wrote the Duke of Wellington in his despatch from the field at Waterloo in June, 1815. The great duke, who had fought many battles and seen much of death and destruction, was under no illusions about glory and the romance of arms. He was content to leave all that to the poets and civilians at home.

Battles, lost or won, may be wonderful or dramatic to those who were not there, but only the actual participants can know exactly what it was like at the point of contact. Those of us who have never been "under fire" can only wonder.

The ranks of those who remember that terrible morning at the port of Dieppe in the summer of 1942 are thinning fast, but fascination with the event itself continues unabated. Few incidents in the military history of Canada have inspired more words of writing or provoked more controversy. Were the Canadians poorly trained and badly led? Were they sent like sheep to the slaughter? Could the raid have been a success if the original plan had been followed?

The nation's great military successes — Vimy Ridge, the "Hundred Days", the liberation of Holland — are remembered with pride, but events such as the Dieppe Raid, which ended badly, continue to perplex us and engage our interest, even after 50 years.

Students of warfare have always been attracted to disaster. There are so many questions to be answered, so many hidden truths to discover, so many thorny points to debate. What went wrong at Majuba Hill? What mistakes were made by the French at Agincourt? If Napoleon had been in better health would Waterloo have ended another way? What really happened on the Somme?

No military action is minor to those who died in it, but, as military actions go, the Dieppe Raid was a small affair. Of 4,963 Canadians who set off from the shores of England on the night of 18 August 1942, 907 lost their lives. There were days during World War I when 50,000 perished. The loss of life at Dieppe was wasteful and tragic, but it was not extraordinary, as these things go. But there was a feeling, expecially among those who were there, that "someone had blundered" and it led to great bitterness.

A few of the bare facts about Dieppe are easy enough to track down, but much of the thinking behind the event remains elusive. In the early months of 1942 the war was not going well for the Allies. The Germans were gaining ground in Russia. In Egypt, they were at the gates of Alexandria. The British and Americans were making war in North Africa, but it all seemed likely to be a long, uphill climb. There were calls to establish the long-awaited "second front" in Western Europe.

The time was not yet ripe for a full-scale Allied invasion, but something on a smaller scale might be attempted, to reassure the Russians, to test the waters or to achieve some objective or other. Plans for a raid in force on the channel port of Dieppe were being drawn up as early as April 1942 at the headquarters of the British Chief of Combined Operations, Vice-Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten. How did the Canadians become involved? Opinions vary. Some point out that Prime Minister W.L. Mackenzie King had been calling for the utilization of Canadian troops who had been languishing in Britain and, allegedly, "spoiling for a fight". It has also been suggested that an action involving Canadian troops would suit the political agenda at home, where Mr. King had been going through the horrors of the conscription crisis. An even more cynical view is one which suggests that Winston Churchill and his chiefs-of-staff decided to invite the Canadians to participate in what was to be a gesture to impress the Russians because Canadian troops were considered expendable, Canada being regarded by the British and Americans as a "junior partner" in the war effort.

Were the Canadians too easily lured into what many — some with hindsight — considered to be a dubious plan of attack? According to an official history, the operation was offered to General McNaughton on 30 April 1942 and Canadian staff officers, perhaps unwisely, gave the opinion that it had a good chance of success.

The main body of troops selected for the raid came from two brigades of the 2nd Canadian Division, with a Canadian tank regiment equipped with Churchill tanks. Major-General J.H. Roberts of the 2nd Canadian Division was appointed Military Force Commander, with back-up from the Royal Navy and the RAF. British commando formations were also involved.

"The port of Dieppe", according to an official Canadian war history, "lies on low ground between high cliffs. The plan of attack called for four prelim-

inary flank landings at dawn, to be followed by a frontal assault on the town itself half an hour later." British commando units were to undertake the outer flank attacks on either side of the town, while more direct assaults would be undertaken by the Royal Regiment of Canada, the South Saskatchewan Regiment, the Cameron Highlanders, the Essex Scottish, the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry and the Calgary tank regiment. The Fusiliers Mount-Royal would serve, with Royal Marines, as a "floating reserve" and act as a rear-guard when the moment to remove arrived. The raiders left the English coast at dusk on the evening of August 18. The plan began to unravel almost from the start. Great secrecy was required, but about an hour before dawn part of the Allied flotilla of landing craft encountered an enemy convoy consisting of five vessels with a naval escort. A noisy little fight ensued and the element of surprise was lost.

Meanwhile, the British had decided to forgo a planned aerial bombardment of the Dieppe fortifications (For fear of waking up French civilians? To save the casino?). Naval support consisted of four Hunt-class destroyers armed with four-inch guns which could do no damage to the German defence positions. When the raiders arrived the Germans were ready for them.

When the Canadians went ashore they were met with a withering fire. The tanks bogged down in the sand. Scenes of horror and carnage took place. Death rained down from the cliffs above. Soldiers huddled under enemy fire on the beach or sought protection against the seawall. A participant later described his part of the battle: "The beach was littered with dead and dying Canadians, their equipment strewn all over. I saw Pte. Armstrong of the Royal Regiment of Canada, Bren gun in hand, exposed, running wildly along the beach. He had lost his helmet and was cursing — not the Germans, but our own NCOs and officers, and naming some of them. He was firing at the cliffs above and trying to get everyone else to do the same. He was cut down by the German cross fire." It was all over by noon. There were some successes that day, but they added up to very little. The Royal Hamilton Light Infantry made some progress by the casino and along the promenade. Members of the South Saskatchewans and some Camerons crossed the seawall and advanced inland, but were eventually forced to retreat with heavy losses. Some of the commando units reached their objectives, although it has been suggested that Lord Lovat's commando succeeded by devising its own plan of attack.

By early afternoon, those who could had escaped to sea while 1,946 prepared to begin the humiliating march into German captivity. The dead were gathered up and buried. The arguments began and they are still going on. What was it all about? The official line has always been that Dieppe was a kind of rehearsal for the real invasion of Europe. Lessons learned at Dieppe, we have been told, saved lives on the beaches of Normandy. It might be possible to argue, on the other hand, that the lessons learned at such cost on the red beaches of Dieppe might have been learned more comfortably on the safe side of the English Channel if common sense had been mustered. Anyone who had ever been to Dieppe might have pointed out the considerable problems imposed by the terrain: high cliffs, low beach, seawall. They might also have considered that if you are worried about killing civilians and damaging property in a sea port with air attacks, it might be better to launch an invasion on open beaches. Nobody, of course, could predict that the flotilla would encounter enemy ships, but, having done so and lost the element of surprise, it might have been prudent

The beach at Dieppe, afternoon, 19 August, 1942. (National Archives of Canada).

and made good sense to abandon the raid. With common sense, as well, it might have been unnecessary to have a dress rehearsal in order to discover that air support and fire power are mandatory when you plan to storm strongly defended positions.

There is another story that suggests that the raid was a diversionary tactic staged to allow commando units to perform a separate raid on German radar installations near Dieppe, although some have suggested that this operation could have been conducted by a commando unit arriving quietly in rubber rafts on a moonless night.

The debate will go on as long as there are students of military history, but for 907 Canadian soldiers, many of them little more than teenagers, World War II ended suddenly on the bright morning of 19 August 1942. The youngest of them would be old today, but that is no consolation for their loss. Fifty years on, Canadians still regret their passing and honour their memory.

— **Christopher Dafoe**

MONTCALM AT QUEBEC, 1759

'But the King Must be Obeyed'

By Ian McCulloch

Without a doubt, the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, 1759, is one of the most romanticized and evocative battles in the annals of North American and British military history. Depending on one's perspective, it can be viewed many ways: a victory of one Empire over another; a victory of the Thirteen Colonies over New France; a victory of the European mode of warfare over *la petite guerre*; a victory of audacity and discipline over dogma and lethargy.

Visually it is an eighteenth-century battle scene of the Traditional School, painted in the serenity of a London studio — a composition with a sweeping blue sky, a green and gold plain of serried scarlet ranks confronting confused blue-grays and white flowing away against woods of autumn hue. To some, it is dauntless Wolfe reciting Grey's *Elegy* while boatloads of troops silently drift downstream in darkness, or soldiers cursing and clawing their way up a steep cliff, or famous death scenes and heroes larger than life.

Underlying all the foregoing hyperbole is a human story of courage and fear; leadership and negligence; compulsion and caution; doubts and uncertainty; endurance and stress. Montcalm's army has become a faceless entity with the passage of time. What motivated the army of Louis-Joseph de Montcalm-Gozon? What were his soldiers fighting for? Their King and country? *La gloire?* Or just for themselves? And what were the direct experiences of these men at "the point of maximum danger"? What were the physical conditions of the battle? What were their feelings and emotions prior to and after it?

The campaign and siege leading up to the battle are well known. It was a combined land and naval operation the likes of which the New World had never seen. Wolfe's assigned objective was the capture of Quebec while two other armies moved simultaneously on separate axes against the French in the south: Amherst's on Montreal and Prideaux's on Niagara. It was part of Pitt's great scheme to wrest the Canadians from their rich hinterland in the west and to eradicate France's presence from North America.

Wolfe's strategical aim was to bring Montcalm's regulars to battle and destroy them, thereby winning the war in North America with one master stroke. Montcalm's aim was to defend Quebec until the onset of winter river ice drove his opponent away.

Montcalm's army was a living reflection of the personal antagonism between the French general and the Canadian-born Governor of New France, Pierre Francois Rigaud, Marquis de Vaudreuil. The two had constantly bickered over who should control military affairs and strategy in North Amercia. The *troupes de terre* (troops of the line), were under the direct command of Montcalm. The other two components of his army, however, the militia and the *troupes de la marine* (colony regulars), were under the command of Vaudreuil. This disunity of command led to problems on the day of battle.

French regulars had arrived in New France for the Seven Years' War in 1755. The first contingent, under Baron Dieskau, consisted of the Second Battalions of La Reine, Languedoc, Guyenne, and Bearn Regiments. These landed in Montreal while two additional battalions of the Artois and Bourgogne Regiments were sent to Louisbourg.

The following year, fifes trilling and drums beating, Montcalm landed at Quebec bringing with him the Second Battalions of the Royal-Rousillon and La Sarre Regiments. He was Dieskau's replacement, the unfortunate aristocrat having been captured by American provincials at Lake George the previous summer. In

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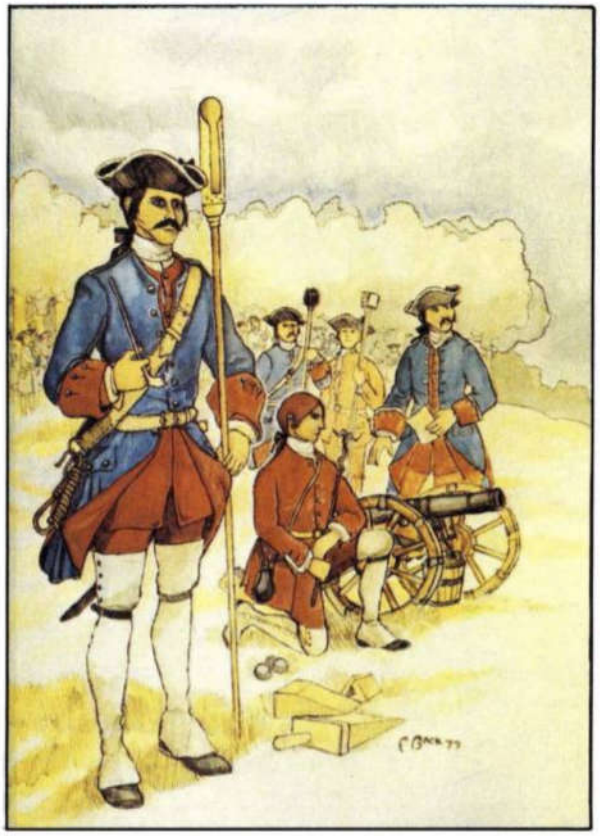
"I think I would give up all my honours to be back with you, but the King must be obeyed. The moment I see you again will be the best of my life."
— *Montcalm's last letter to his wife, 1759.*

1757, the Second and Third Battalions of the Berry Regiment arrived at Quebec to round out Montcalm's small regular force.

All of these regiments fought with Montcalm at his most famous victory in the New World — the Battle of Carillon, 1758 — where his 3,500 regulars defeated a larger British-American force numbering some 15,000 troops under Abercromby at Ticonderoga. However, only five of Montcalm's eight regular battalions were present at the Plains battle — the Bearn, La Sarre, Guyenne, Royal Rousillon and the Languedoc. These had been augmented by 100 selected Canadien militiamen each in spring 1759 when much-needed replacements from France had failed to materialize. The militiamen were incorporated into the regulars' ranks with little or no training.

In addition to his regulars Montcalm could call upon (but not depend on) the services of the *troupes de la marine*, or as they were formally called *Les Compagnies franches de la Marine*. These were the colonial regulars or marines that formed the permanent military establishment of New France. Though attached to the French Naval Department, they served on land and were also employed as a kind of *gendarmerie* within the limits of the colony. During the Plains battle, three battalions of 500 colonial marines, from Montreal, Quebec and Trois Rivieres respectively, fought in the French battle line alongside the regular battalions.



Francis Back/David M. Stewart Museum

Montcalm's Artillery: An artist's reconstruction shows soldiers of the Canonniers-Bombardiers Regiment. Troops man a six-pounder.

Francis Back/David M. Stewart Museum

Montcalm's Colonial Regulars: Soldiers of Les Compagnies franches de la Marine, circa 1757.

Finally, all the effective male population of New France, from fifteen years to sixty, was enrolled in the militia, and called into service at the will of Vaudreuil. They received arms, clothing, equipment and rations from the king, but no pay. The best of them came from the hinterlands, the so-called *coureurs de bois*, well-versed in bushfighting or *la petite guerre*. By 1758 they numbered close to 15,000 though not all this number were employed at Quebec. About 4,000 were employed in transferring troops and supplies up and down the river.

Added to Montcalm's army were the Indian allies, though their value was more psychological than practical. Montcalm called them those *villains messieurs* and wrote to his mother, "one needs the patience of an angel to get on with them. Ever since I have been here, I have had nothing but visits, harangues and deputations of these gentry. . . . They make war with astounding cruelty, sparing neither men, women or children, and take off your scalp very neatly — an operation which generally kills you."

Early on 13 September 1759 the battle started in darkness, a disorienting and stressful condition for any soldier launching into the unknown. Wolfe's army on the heights could see through a showery dawn down to the Beauport Lines where the majority of Montcalm's army was encamped and dug in. But the first French "troops" the British "saw" were small "flying pickets" of *Canadien* militiamen sniping at them from the scrub. "Saw" is perhaps the wrong word, for an essential of the *Canadien* mode of warfare, derived from over one hundred years of fighting with and against Indians, was "not to be seen".

It should be said that *la petite guerre* of the *Canadien* irregulars and Indians was regarded contemptuously as unfair and cowardly conduct not only by the British, but also by the French regulars as well. *Colonel d'Infanterie* Louis Antoine de Bougainville wrote kindly that the Canadien auxiliaries possessed "a different kind of courage" in their penchant for concealing themselves and favouring the ambush over direct confrontation. Another French officer, the Chevalier de Montreuil was less charitable. To him "braggart" Canadiens were good skirmishers but only "brave behind a tree and very timid when not covered."

Contemporary British accounts of the battle and siege thus refer to the Canadien militiamen as "sculking fellows", "scoundrels", "savages and hidden rascals". As one sergeant-major in the Louisbourg Grenadiers wrote, "the constant Scaldering fire upon

our Men" caused Wolfe to order his front line to lie down and thus render themselves "unseen" in response to the enemy. Though the exact time this occurred is uncertain, Lieutenant John Knox of the 43rd Foot (Kennedy's) records that it was just before eight o'clock when the French battle line was forming:

> What galled us most was a body of Indians and other marksmen they had concealed in the corn opposite to the front of our right wing and a coppice that stood opposite to our centre, inclining towards our left; but Col: Hale [47th Regiment] . . . advanced some platoons alternately, which after a few rounds, obliged these sculkers to retire: we were now ordered to lie down, and remained some time in this position . . .

The British front line was removed not only from the sight of Canadien marksmen but from the sight of the French commander, Montcalm, as well. From French diaries it would appear that Montcalm and his senior officers had a hard time assessing the actual strength of the British army facing them. Knox records that captured French officers revealed in post-battle interviews that "it was very difficult to persuade Monsieur de Montcalm and the other commanders that the flower of [the British] army was behind the town."

Many combatants left detailed accounts of what they saw and in some cases recalled in the most minute detail. Joseph Trahan, an impressionable eighteen-year-old militiaman from Quebec wrote: "I remember . . . how [Montcalm] looked. He rode a black or dark bay horse along the front of our lines, brandishing his sword, as if to execute us to do our duty. He wore a coat with wide sleeves, which fell back as he raised his arm".

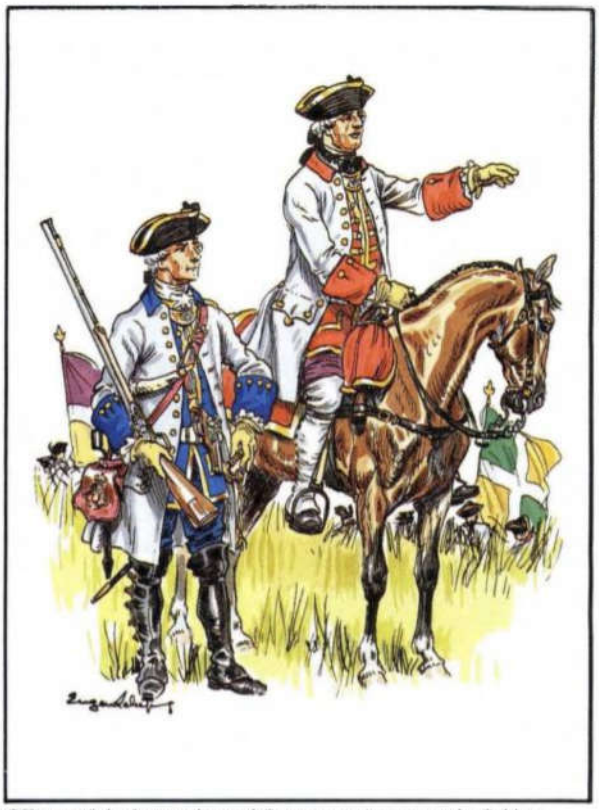
Louis-Joseph, Marquis de Montcalm-Gozon, Commander-in-chief of the French Army in North America.

Montcalm's adjutant states in his journal that he had never seen his general "so melancholy" as he rode up to the heights with his troops to give battle. Ordinarily a free and vivacious talker, Montcalm apparently did not speak a single word: "it seemed as though he felt his fate upon him." The surprise manoeuvre of Wolfe striking at his supposedly unassailable centre, instead of at the left (Beauport) or right (Cap Rouge) flanks, defied the defensive dogma of the day. On sighting the red-coated ranks of the British on the Heights, Montcalm is reported by Lieutenant Marcel, his aide-de-camp, to have muttered angrily, "They have no right to be where they are!" A strident comment certainly, but one that fails to address the old battle maxim that if three courses are open to your enemy, he will invariably choose the fourth.

The human dimension of war is always part and parcel with the external factors which enhance or detract from the participants' abilities to perform. Several factors emerge from the Plains battle which help define the human context in which Montcalm's army found themselves.

MEN-AT-WAR

French regiments of the day were composed of one or more battalions. Each battalion had 12 companies of fusiliers and one of grenadiers for a total of 556 all ranks. The Second and Third Battalions of the Berry Regiment were originally destined for service in India, thus were somewhat under strength in comparison to the others. Each had only nine fusilier companies and one grenadier company for a total of 480 all ranks. A fusilier company appears to have normally consisted of 50 men when at full strength, a luxury which the Canadian battalions seldom enjoyed. The usual complement of officers and non-commissioned officers was a captain, a lieutenant, an ensign, a cadet or two, as well as two sergeants. Included in the fifty-man company would be two corporals and a drummer whose job was to relay orders in battle.



Eugène Lelièpure/David M. Stewart Museum

Officers of the Languedoc and Guyenne regiments on the field at Quebec. Normally the Languedoc officer (standing) would have carried a spear-like spontoon, but many French officers discarded this symbol of office for a more practical light musket known as a "fusil".

The first is fatigue. The French army at the Plains battle had been standing-to all night in their open trenches anticipating an attack down at Beauport. They had just been allowed to get some rest when they were summarily ordered up to the Heights. Force-marching the four miles, they arrived bleary-eyed, hungry, and wet, and were immediately formed into line of battle. Which of the two small armies was more run-down is not too hard to figure out.

Well-victualled by their fleet, the common British soldier's diet was vastly superior to that of his French counterpart. French deserters prior to the battle revealed to Wolfe that their army was on half-rations and reduced to eating "bread made with new wheat". Fatigue and hunger can cause a diminishment of morale in the best of troops.

Besides fatigue and hunger, the soldiers who faced one another on the Plains also had to contend with two more ingredients of battle well known to all men of their profession — smoke and noise. Of the noise level on the battlefield we have no accurate information. Indeed, the first phase of the battle required silence in order to be successful. By the time the attack went "noisy", it was too late for the French to prevent the egress of the British army onto the Heights and so-called "Plains". Prior to the "general action", (an event loud enough to have been recorded in all the British ships' logs as being of approximately 15 minutes duration), Captain Montbeillard, the officer in charge of Montcalm's field artillery, heard his Commander wonder aloud, "Is it possible that Bougainville does not hear all that noise?" The general was, of course, referring to over 3,000 skirmishers' muskets keeping up a constant fusillade of small arms fire. Added to this, according to Lieutenant Knox "was an incessant firing between the town and our south batteries [on Point Levis]".

Human noise at the battle was also apparent to the participants. Once the "general action" got underway there was cheering. Knox remembered that "the enemy began to advance briskly in three columns with loud shouts." A light infantryman, well to the rear, heard them too and noted "the enemy huzza'd when they advanced."

The greyish-white clouds of smoke produced by black-powder weapons firing volley fire would have lasted some minutes during the "general action" but their effects were noted. The same British light infantryman watching to the rear (and downwind) of the battle reported that the fire was so heavy that "the smell of gunpowder became nautious [*sic*]".

Accounts of the smoke-producing volleys also reveal an aspect of the battle never examined before. Lieutenant Malcolm Fraser states that the 78th Highlanders could not see Montcalm's regulars for some time saying "we returned [fire] and continued firing very hot for about six, or (as some say) eight minutes when the fire slackening, and the smoke of the powder vanishing, we observed the main body of the Enemy retreating in great confusion. . . ." Lieutenant Knox with the 43rd in the centre of the line confirms that the French gave way unseen, fleeing "with precipitation, so that by the time the cloud of smoke was vanished, our men were again loaded and profiting by the advantage we had over them. . . ."

Most of the French regulars who had not been killed or wounded too badly to move thus had time to flee covered by a smokescreen of the British front line's own making. It is of note that none of the five French regimental colours was captured, thus confirming that the French regulars made a good headstart while they were obscured from their opponent's view.

From out of the smoke, noise and confusion of battle on 13 September 1759, what turned General Montcalm's proud cheering battalions into a terrified rabble in the course of a few minutes? An eighteenth-century battlefield by all accounts was a horrific place, but Montcalm's soldiers were veterans. A quick look at some of the weapons and drill of the day might reveal some answers.

The Plains battlefield, photographed by the author on a recent misty September morning. Wolfe's right wing was forward deployed on the hill just descernible through the trees. The photograph was taken from the point where the Royal Rousillon began the attack.

There were no artillery duels at the Plains battle, though the city batteries and the British batteries on Point de Levis provided a constant backdrop of noise. An important auxiliary arm of any European-style battle, artillery played an insignificant role in practical terms during this battle. Its potential threat to the enemy and one's own troops however, was never far from the respective commanders' minds.

At daybreak, the first artillery to fire was French — the Samos battery gunners awakening to a river alive with British shipping. They inflicted some casualties and damage, but this battery was quickly silenced by British light infantry taking it from the rear.

On the battlefield proper, the French out-gunned the British, though most diarists are confused about the total numbers employed by each side. The British by all accounts had two light 6-pounder guns which were dragged up the Foulon Cove road after daybreak and went into action about two hours before the "general action". Lieutenant Knox wrote that "about eight o'clock we had two pieces of short brass 6-pounders playing on the enemy which drew them into some confusion and obliged them to alter their dispositions". Montbeillard corroborates this when he reports a conversation he had with his General on one of his artillery errands prior to the general action: "I paused with M. le Marquis de Montcalm who said to me: 'We cannot avoid action; the enemy is entrenching, he already has two pieces of cannon. If we give him time to establish himself, we shall never be able to attack him with the *types of troops* [author's emphasis] we have!"

Here we have Montcalm's own recognition or belief that he had enough disciplined regulars to march into the fire of two guns and succeed, but any further introduction of artillery to the battlefield would sway the odds in Wolfe's favour. It is interesting to note that the perceptive Wolfe had told his mother in a letter before the battle that Montcalm, "the wary old fellow, avoids an action, doubtful of the behaviour of his army." Wolfe also told his troops in a general order before battle that they faced "five weak battalions mingled with a disorderly peasantry", no match therefore for British regulars "inured to war". The fact is that Montcalm's army was just as "inured to war" as Wolfe's, but one critical question remains: "What type of war are we talking about — European or North American?"

Wolfe's regulars were European heavy infantry. Just what Montcalm's soldiers had become after four years in North America is a matter for debate. After the rout of the French infantry in the "general action", one of Montcalm's aides wrote despondently in the General's journal that "the French soldier no longer knew any discipline, and instead of molding the Canadien, he assumed all of his faults."

The effect of French artillery fire is dismissed by British diarists in one or two lines. Lieutenant Knox

David M. Stewart Museum

Montreal students re-enact the drill and tactics of Les Compagnies franches de la Marine every summer at the old fort on St. Helen's Island in Montreal.

wrote: "The enemy . . . got some cannon to play on us with round shot and canister" but it was the Indians and Canadien marksmen which "galled us most". The effects of British guns on the French however, is another matter. We have seen that well-directed artillery fire "threw them into some confusion and obliged them to alter their dispositions". During the French regulars' advance Knox notes that "the grapeshot from our two fieldpieces made havoc among them and threw them into some disorder". Lieutenant Fraser pointed out that as soon as the British line went forward to the attack, the two British guns which were doing such "good execution" were immediately masked. "Our regiment was ordered . . . to draw our swords and pursue [the French]," he wrote, "which I daresay increased their panic but saved many of their lives, for if the artillery had been allowed to play . . . there would have been many more Enemy killed and wounded."

Montcalm's mortal wounds were said to have been inflicted by artillery fire during the retreat to the gates. Colonel Williamson, Wolfe's artillery commander, later asserted that the French commander had fallen victim to grape-shot from one of his 6-pounders on the right of the British line. It is possible that Montcalm, prominent on his dark charger, was "sniped" by a British gun crew. Eighteenth-century field pieces were aimed by a gunlayer over open sights and the fall of shot was usually observable. A sergeant-major in the Louisbourg Grenadiers who was forward at the time seems to corroborate the story that the French general "was torn to pieces by our Grape-shot" though he may have seen one of the other two Brigadiers knocked down or may have merely echoed the boastful claims of Williamson's gunners after the battle. It is doubtful that British guns would be firing anti-personnel shot over the heads of their own troops pursuing the French to the city gates.

The nature of Montcalm's wounds were never described in detail by the French. His adjutant, Malartic, merely recorded that his general's wounds were in the lower part of the stomach and thighs. The fact that there was more than one wound may have given rise to the grape-shot story.

It is fair to say, however, that contemporary writers and diarists, and subsequent historians, have been mesmerized by the short timeframe in which "tragic"

David M. Stewart Museum

Montcalm had four or five of these small cast-iron guns at the Plains of Abraham which were served by hand-picked men of the colonial regulars who, when not employed as gunners, doubled as grenadiers.

Montcalm and "heroic" Wolfe received their mortal wounds: colours going majestically forward, troops steady and resolute with fixed bayonets, and officers muttering their traditional, "For what we are about to receive . . . !"

Skirmishing occurred throughout the entire day of battle, perhaps reaching its height *after* the "general action" between the regulars. It was then that Wolfe's disciplined soldiers broke ranks to join in a somewhat chaotic pursuit of Montcalm's broken army and the British army started to sustain its heaviest casualties. The regiments on the British right found themselves embroiled in bitter fighting against Canadien militiamen who did not flee the field like Montcalm's regulars. Only when British troops reformed into companies could they drive off the persistent Canadiens.

It is interesting to note that the Canadien militiamen had not only adopted Indian methods of fighting, but Indian attitudes to war. Foremost was the idea that victory involved inflicting maximum casualties on one's enemy without sustaining any oneself. Given this belief, it is quite possible that a number of Canadiens proudly left the Plains battlefield knowing they had not run, had fought their kind of "battle" and had "won".

The head-on clash of Montcalm's heavy infantry against Wolfe's heavy infantry on the Plains of Abraham is referred to in all histories as the "general action". John Keegan, an eminent British military historian, has called this type of clash "the crucial element of almost every battle fought in the period [from] the eclipse of the armoured horseman in the fourteenth century [to] the rise of the armoured fighting vehicle in the twentieth century."

There was no cavalry at the Plains battle and we have seen that the effects of artillery were marginal at best. Skirmishers were unable to move the British soldiers who either lay down or fought back *à la canadienne*. Therefore, it ultimately came down to the type of encounter which Wolfe had eagerly sought and Montcalm had desperately tried to avoid. By adopting a purely defensive strategy, Montcalm had neglected to train the 500 to 600 militiamen he had incorporated as regular replacements into his heavy infantry that spring. Nor had he re-instilled in his jaded regulars the discipline and movements required for a set-piece battle.

Eugène Lelièpure/David M. Stewart Museum

Soldiers of Les Compagnies franches de la Marine. An officer with a spontoon instructs non-commissioned officers as a drummer looks on. Private soldiers stand to the rear.

Lieutenant James Johnstone, a Jacobite officer in the French colonial marines and ADC to Montcalm, is quite explicit as to his opinions on why the French infantry went forward "in confusion" and were "repulsed in an instant". He laments, "how could it be otherwise from the absense of our Voluntaires [regular light infantry] and Grenadiers . . . the bravest soldiers in a Regiment [who] infuse courage in the most timid. . . ." Montcalm had sent them all upriver and placed them under the command of Bougainville at Cap Rouge. Another French diarist refers to Bougainville's absent force as "the flower of our army".

This lack of junior leadership in the French regiments was noted by Montcalm and his senior officers just prior to the battle. Johnstone states that Montcalm had convened an impromptu council of war and discussed the mode of attack:

> Montreuil said it would be better to attack in columns. [Montcalm] answered him: "That we would be beat before our columns could be formed so near to the enemy; and, besides, that our columns must be very weak, not having Grenadiers to place at their heads."

Montcalm's precipitate attack has always been viewed in a controversial light. He knew that infantry holding ground had to be forcibly removed by other infantry. It has been seen in his comments to his gunner, Montbeillard, that he was less than happy with the "type of troops" with which he had to shift Wolfe's soldiers digging in astride his critical lines of supply with Trois Rivieres and Montreal. For Montcalm the essential question was never should he attack Wolfe but *when*.

Many historians in hindsight have soundly castigated Montcalm for launching his frontal attack and not waiting for Bougainville's force of "elite" soldiers to attack the British rear in a co-ordinated simultaneous attack. These experts ignore the distances, terrain and lack of communications between the two forces. British troops assigned to the rear of Wolfe's army, plus the reserve who were never used in the "general action", were probably sufficient to have neutralized any aggression by a timid Bougainville.

In the end the French *did* attack in columns, as all British diarists faithfully report, although there are some indications that Montcalm did issue orders to attack in line. Brigadier Townshend, in command after the "general action", but not in the front line, gathered eye-witness accounts for his dispatch to Pitt and related that the Bearn and Guyenne Regiments in the centre formed a dense column, but implies the left and right wings were in line. Lieutenant Fraser of the 78th who *was* in the British front line gives us a clearer picture:

> . . . we observed the Enemy formed, having a bush of short wood on their right, which straitened them in room, and obliged them to form in columns . . . the French Army advanced in columns till they had got past the bush of wood onto the plain when they *endeavoured* [author's emphasis] to form in line of battle, but being much galled by our Artillery, which consisted of only one field piece [on the left] . . . we observed them in some confusion. However, they advanced at a brisk pace till within about 30 or 40 yards of our front, when they gave us their first fire which did little execution. . . . they were generally superior to us in numbers, as their line was equal to ours in length, tho' they were in some places nine deep, whereas, ours was no more than three deep."

Malartic, Montcalm's adjutant, attributes the French infantry's repulse to the fact that they tried to adopt line instead of carrying on in column formation to break the British line. Marcel, one of Montcalm's aides in the thick of the fight, records that the attempt to form line was disastrous and that the officers lost control of their men immediately. Malartic agrees. "We had not gone twenty paces," he writes "when [our] left was too far in the rear and [our] centre too far in the front". At "about half-musket shot" from the British (approximately 50 yards) the uneven French line halted, probably to dress and form line but Malartic states they fired a ragged volley without orders. "The incorporated Canadiens who joined the second rank [lines form in ranks, columns form in files] and the soldiers of the third rank fired without orders, and according to their custom [the Canadiens] threw

themselves on the ground to reload. This false movement broke all the battalions." Malartic also noted bitterly that most "incorporated" Canadiens then "about-faced" and left their battalions to join their Canadien comrades on the right flank.

Added to this confusion were the small groups and platoons of Canadien irregulars and Indians, well to the front of the advancing formations now trying to retreat back through the main body to avoid being sandwiched between the two battle lines. Unable to retire through any well-defined intervals in the French columns which were in the process of deploying into line, they streamed through the battalions causing greater pandemonium.

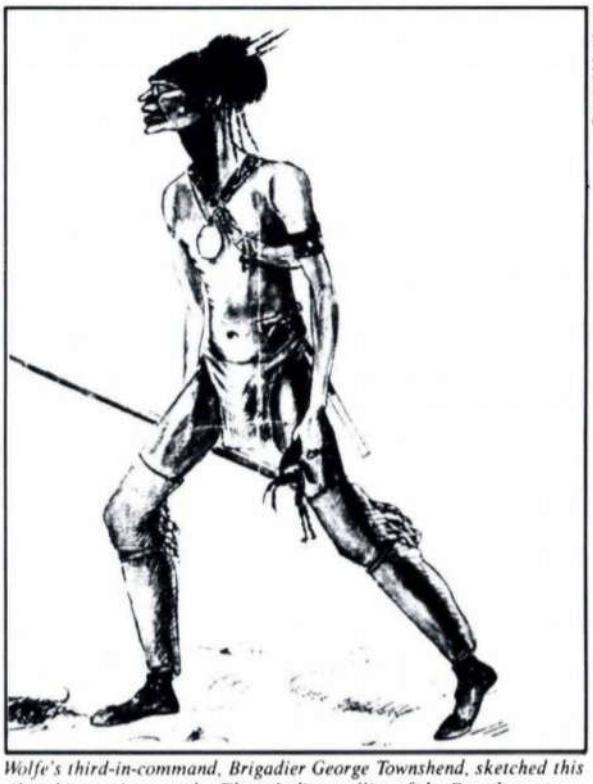
This confusion did not go unnoticed by the British regulars calmly waiting for their opponents to approach. British descriptions of Montcalm's army advancing nearly all critique and provide professional opinion on its dressing, demeanour and discipline. In light of the artillery fire, terrain and the conduct of the Canadien skirmishers and incorporated Canadiens, it seems the French regulars did all that was humanly possible to go forward.

The Plains battle can be said to have been a watershed encounter for it was there the "penny finally dropped" for Governor Vaudreuil and his Canadien confederates. It was the realization that the old style of "guerilla" warfare did not win land battles. Even Bougainville, Montcalm's young and somewhat inexperienced protegé, had noted the ascendancy of the European mode of warfare over *la petite guerre* after the Battle of Carillon the year before. He wrote:

> War now is established here on a European basis. Projects for campaign, for armies, for artillery, for sieges, for battles. It is no longer a question of making a raid, but of conquering or being conquered. What a revolution! What a change!

The dilemma created in mixing the two types of warfare was not only confusing for the participants but it had tragic results for the French army as a whole, best illustrated by Montcalm's attempt to use Canadiens as heavy infantry. Their reflexive dropping to the ground to load whilst in battalion formation serves to highlight the indisputable fact that their general had not taken pains to train them for the situation he ultimately placed them in. The Canadiens' loading techniques and subsequent desertion had a significant effect on Montcalm's army: it facilitated complete disintegration.

The psychological impact of seeing one-fifth of one's battalion desert in broad daylight must remain speculative, but it can probably be stated that the Canadiens' actions must have had a demoralizing effect on the French regulars who were gritting their teeth and marching forward with their colours.



Courtald Institute

Wolfe's third-in-command, Brigadier George Townshend, sketched this Abeneki carrying a scalp. These Indians, allies of the French, were particularly troublesome in harassing the British camps at Point Lèvis and on the Ile d'Orleans.

Vaudreuil noted that 44 French officers were killed on the field of battle, including Montcalm's two Brigadiers, Sennerzergues and St-Ours, who were both mortally wounded. This is a good indication of who was leading from the front in the absence of the grenadiers and *voluntaires*. Knox reported that French officers who survived and were captured, marvelled at the British musketry saying "that they never opposed such a shock as they received from . . . our line, for they believed every ball took place, and such regularity and discipline they had not experienced before."

It has been said that "inside every army is a crowd struggling to get out." No wonder then that Montcalm's infantry, with its officers well to the front, many killed outright in the first, British double-shotted volley, became a rabble. In fact, they became the antithesis of an army. Nowhere was it more self-evident that Montcalm's army had disintegrated than at the rear of the battlefield. There in the hornwork, a small fort covering the only pontoon bridge across the River St. Charles, stood Montcalm's Jacobite aide, Lieutenant Johnstone. He wrote that there was "dread and consternation" everywhere:

> It is impossible to imagine the disorder and confusion that I found in the hornwork . . . M. de Vaudreuil listened to everybody and was always of

> the advice of he who spoke last. No order was given with reflection or with coolness, none knowing what to order or what to do. . . . Our men lost their heads entirely; they became demoralized, imagining that the English troops . . . would in an instant cross the plain and fly over the St. Charles River into the hornwork. . . . It is certain that when fear once seizes hold of men it not only deprives them totally of their judgement and reflection, but also of the use of their eyes and their ears, and they become a thousand times worse than brute creation, guided by instinct only . . .

Strong words, but behaviour witnessed first-hand. The infection spread to men that had not even been present at the battle — the men manning the hornwork. "There arose a general cry in the hornwork to cut the bridge of boats," wrote Johnstone. He added, "It is worthy of remark that not a fourth of the army had yet arrived at it, and . . . by cutting the bridge [the remainder] would have been left on the other side as victims of the victors." Only by exerting himself with the help of another officer, Johnstone "ran there and without asking who had given the order to cut it . . . chased away the soldiers with their uplifted axes ready to execute that extravagant and wicked operation".

Later that night, the crowd-like behaviour of Montcalm's regulars persisted as they circled around to the north of a tired British army digging in, and made their escape up river. Johnstone wrote disgustedly:

> It was a march entirely in the Indian manner: not a retreat, but a horrid, abominable flight, a thousand times worse than that in the morning upon the heights of Abraham, with such disorder and confusion that, had the English known it, three hundred men sent after us would have been sufficient to destroy and cut all our army to pieces."

The British army, however, was pre-occupied in licking its own wounds and rapidly entrenching in anticipation of a counter-attack which would never come. French and British wounded during the general action lay where they fell, neither side prepared to retrieve them until the pursuit and consolidation phases of the battle were complete. The majority of French killed and wounded lay in heaps approximately 40 paces from the initial British front line, victims of the first double-shotted volley. Lieutenant Fraser noted that "in advancing, we passed over a great many dead and wounded (French regulars mostly) . . ." Sergeant James Thompson, tasked to collect French wounded after the battle commented: "[Their] casualties lay on the field as thick as a flock of sheep and just as they had fallen, for the main body had been completely routed off the ground, and had no opportunity of carrying away their dead and wounded. . . . it was horrible to see the effect of blood and dust on their white coats".

The battle of the Plains of Abraham, 1759, has been touted as a triumph of the professional soldier over the amateur, but Montcalm had as many regulars on the field as Wolfe. What the battle did establish was a firm understanding that any future strategic warfare on the North American continent would be decided by standing armies and navies. Its categorization as a decisive battle of the Western World, however, by such historians as Major General J.C. Fuller is suspect.

The Plains battle did not deal a death blow to the French army, for it ran away to fight again the next year. Nor did it bring about the immediate downfall of the imperial power it was waged against. Indeed, most historians of today recognize that the French empire's collapse in North America was a foregone conclusion given the superior projection abilities of the Royal Navy, the combined armies of Amherst and Johnson thrusting up from the south, and the French king's reluctance to commit any more troops to "so many acres of snow". These factors were the inexorable realities that decided the fate of New France, not Montcalm's troops "running away to fight another day", nor Wolfe and his "gallant fellows" climbing the heights at Quebec.

The face of battle has become obscured down through the centuries, the words of participants forgotten in a fog of myth and high drama. The Battle of the Plains of Abraham deserves to be returned to its proper historical perspective. Reduced to basics, it was fought by two armies whose principal purpose was the destruction of the other, not the perpetuation of glory and romantic legend. What it had in common with other battles was human: the behaviour of soldiers trying to reconcile their sense of honour, dread of shame and their love of life as they faced each other over levelled muskets. If for no other reason, we should remember the Plains battle in terms of the men who fought it and endured — the soldiers of Montcalm and Wolfe who stayed behind after the Conquest — the same men who defended New France a few years later so that, one day, it could become part of a great nation called Canada.

Major Ian McCulloch is a serving officer with the Royal Canadian Regiment, St-Hubert, Quebec. His article on Wolfe's army at the Plains of Abraham appeared in the April/May 1992 issue of "The Beaver"

Defenders of New France

Montcalm's regiments were not the first French regulars to serve in Canada. That distinction belongs to the famous Carignan-Salieres Regiment (1665-1668) which arrived almost a century earlier to fight the Iroquois and garrison the fledgling towns and forts of New France.

Dressed in conspicuous uniforms consisting of broad black hats, buff-coloured coats decorated with mauve and black ribbons, and mauve stockings (they were the first French line regiment to ever wear a standard uniform), these bronzed veterans of wars against the Turk on the frontiers of Hungary were welcomed as saviours: living proof that the French King intended to take more than a passing interest in colonial affairs.

Reports had reached the French Court in 1664 that the Iroquois had "by the massacre of French settlers, and by the cruelty they exercised on those who fell into their hands, prevented the country from being more populous than it is at present".

A young, indignant Louis XIV ordered Royal troops dispatched to the New World immediately to "carry the war to their door, and to exterminate them entirely." The man chosen to get the job done was the Marquis de Tracy, who sailed over with the first contingent of the Carignan-Salieres, arriving at Quebec in June 1665. By September 1665 the Carignan-Salieres numbered 24 companies of fifty men each, giving Tracy a regular force of 1,200 men to which he could readily add Canadien volunteers and Indian allies.

Tracy conceived a two-phased plan to accomplish his genocidal instructions. First he would construct forts along the Richelieu, then called the Iroquois River. Once control of this essential water highway was established and the easy access it afforded to the colony's enemies denied, he could then move south and crush the Iroquois.

With more zeal than prudence, Tracy's second-in-command, Remy de Courcelles, convinced his general that a force of 500 men launched in the dead of winter could catch the Iroquois by surprise. In January 1666, Tracy gave his approval and Courcelles' snowshoed force reached their objective after suffering many hardships. The 300 regulars, unaccustomed to the rigours of the New World, suffered the most. By contrast, their 200 Canadien cousins took the winter expedition in their stride. The Mohawk wisely avoided a fight and let Mother Nature take its toll. Over a hundred soldiers perished from extreme cold and hunger on the expedition. The Mohawk were content to snipe and pick off stragglers as Courcelles' force struggled back to Quebec, tottering into the city on 17 March 1666 with nothing to show for their efforts. Undaunted, Tracy and Courcelles mounted another expedition in September of the same year, timed to coincide with the Indians' harvest. Twelve hundred men, of which 720 were regulars of the Carignan-Salieres, set off down Lake Champlain in an armada of 300 boats, flags flying and drums beating. The Mohawks again fled at the approach of the French. Indian towns and fields were razed in succession, soldiers feasting on captured corn, then burning the rest. Deprived of their food granaries and shelters for the oncoming winter, the Mohawks of the Five Nations would suffer immeasurably. The other nations of the Confederacy were suitably impressed by the French ability to mount two large war expeditions in the space of one year. When Tracy's men returned to Quebec in November 1666, they were followed shortly by an Iroquois delegation suing for peace. It lasted 17 years.

Two years after Tracy's punitive expedition, the king called the Carignan-Salieres Regiment home. A Jesuit priest at the time paid testimony to the startling changes the presence of the regiment had wrought upon the colony:

> It is beautiful now to see nearly all the banks of our River St-Laurence occupied by new settlements. They stretch along for more than 80 leagues, making navigation not only more agreeable by the sight of houses dotting the riverside, but more convenient for those wishing to stop and rest.

On the Regiment's recall, some 400 officers and men took their discharge in Canada as part of an elaborate soldier-settlement scheme put forward by the Intendant, Jean Talon. He convinced King Louis XIV that the colony should be divided into fiefs or seignories, each to be granted, as far as possible, to men of military background. Size of the land would vary according to the rank and length of service of the applicants. The officers of the Carignan-Salieres received vast tracts of land in the most exposed regions around Montreal and on the Richelieu River, their former soldiers for the most part becoming prosperous tenant farmers and active members in the newly-formed militias. These officers' names are perpetuated throughout the province of Quebec to this day: Sorel, Chambly, Varennes, St. Ours, Boucherville, Contrecours, Rougemont, Berthier, and others. Only four companies of the original twenty-four remained to garrison Canada. These were eventually absorbed by a local populace determined to take a greater role in their own defence through the militia and the raising of the Compagnies franches de la Marine throughout the colony. But that is another story. — **I. McC.** ♦

SENATOR CAIRINE WILSON

First Lady of the Red Chamber

By Valerie Knowles

Although one just man would have saved Sodom and Gomorrha, one good woman will hardly save our Senate. But while we need not expect the Millennium from what has now come, it is at least possible to expect that the fresh viewpoint of a woman, to be reinforced shortly, let us hope, by the viewpoints of other women, will do the Senate some good. "The Journal", at all events, permits itself to be optimistic.

Such were the lofty hopes expressed by one of Ottawa's two English daily papers, *The Journal*, on 17 February 1930, two days after a landmark development in Canadian politics: the elevation of the first woman to the Canadian Senate. The person selected for this honour and the subject of the newspaper's editorial was Cairine Wilson, a wealthy Ottawa matron of gentle charm whose credentials included years of dedicated voluntary work for countless organizations and leadership in the National Federation of Liberal Women of Canada.

Mrs. Wilson's outstanding record of service to the community and demonstrated leadership qualities so impressed *The Journal* that it entertained high hopes for the new senator. In this respect, its faith would not be misplaced. Its hope that Cairine Wilson would soon be joined in the Senate by other members of her sex would not be realized, however. In fact, five years would elapse before another woman was appointed to the Upper House, in this case, Iva Fallis, a Conservative.

Canada's first female senator owed her appointment to an old family friend, that wily bachelor prime minister, William Lyon Mackenzie King. It seems that King had to call upon all his powers of persuasion to get Mrs. Wilson to accept the honour. For, although flattered to be asked, she was initially reluctant to take the great leap into the public limelight that such an appointment presaged.

Her reluctance can be explained not only by her well-known shyness but also by her husband Norman's views on the role of women in society. The product of a conventional upbringing, he believed that a married woman belonged in the home and not in the paid work force, and certainly not in the public eye. Eventually, however, Mr. King succeeded in overcoming various roadblocks to the appointment and on 15 February 1930 the Governor General, Viscount Willingdon, signed the commission.

When she was thrust onto the national stage, Cairine Wilson was forty-five years old, the youthful-looking mother of eight children, and a leading member of the Canadian Establishment.

Cairine Reay Mackay was born in Montreal on 4 February 1885 to Robert Mackay, one of Canada's most powerful businessmen, and Jane Baptist, the daughter of a self-made lumber baron from Trois-Rivieres, Quebec. As befitted a member of a rich Scots-Canadian family, Cairine grew up in a mansion on Sherbrooke Street in the heart of Montreal's famous "Square Mile".

In these privileged surroundings she and her seven brothers and sisters were raised on a diet of liberalism and Scottish Presbyterianism, which emphasized the duty of each Christian to manifest God's will in everything he did. The Protestant work ethic and the concept of stewardship — the belief that individuals should use their talents and any wealth that they have to benefit mankind — would become driving forces in her life.

Since the gruff family patriarch was a rigorous disciplinarian, luxury for the Mackay children was tempered not only by the teachings of their church but also by a very strict upbringing. Still, unlike some of her brothers, Cairine never rebelled openly against her parents' puritanical regime or against the earnest self-denial and self-discipline that Scots Calvinism implies. These influences would make, however, for a very shy, reserved woman, albeit one with a quiet sense of humour and an abundance of warmth and compassion.

Cairine Mackay attended private girls' schools, where she enjoyed studying, ranking first in her graduation year at Trafalgar Institute, an exclusive ladies' finishing school. Although she would have been an

Portrait bust of Senator Cairine Wilson by Felix de Weldon. Created in 1939, it now stands in the Senate anti-chamber, Ottawa.

excellent student, the future senator never attended university because, with one exception, the young women from her circle of friends in 1902 did not pursue higher education. Nevertheless, the future senator furthered a latent interest in politics by frequently accompanying her father to Ottawa after his appointment to the Senate in 1901.

When visiting Canada's then raw, parochial capital, Cairine often stayed at the home of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, a friend of her father's. On one of these visits in 1905 Lady Laurier introduced Cairine to Norman Wilson, then Liberal MP for Russell County and one of Ottawa's most eligible bachelors.

Following her marriage to Norman Wilson in 1909 Cairine moved to Rockland, Ontario, a small eastern Ontario mill town, where her husband had become manager of the W.C. Edwards and Company's lumber mills. There Mrs. Wilson adopted the style of life decreed for a woman of her circumstances — raising children and managing a large home. After her mother's death in 1912, she also assumed the daunting responsibility of helping to manage her father's households in Montreal and St. Andrews, New Brunswick.

It was a role that she seemed destined to play for years to come had fate not intervened in the form of an observation made by a family doctor. When she had been married for some ten years this blunt physician told her that she was no longer the stimulating, intelligent woman that he had once known. Having devoted herself almost exclusively to the management of three large houses and the care of her children, she had lost a lot of her sparkle and interest in intellectual pursuits. In short, she had become a most uninteresting individual.

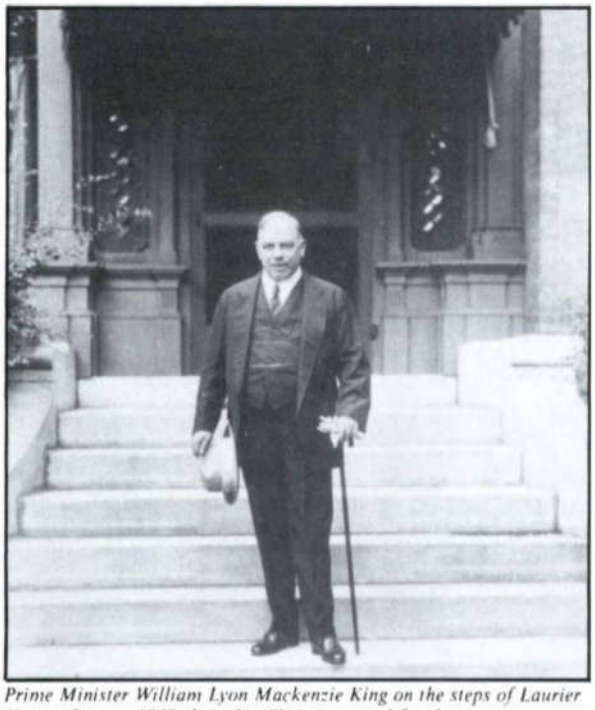
This observation was made after the Wilsons' move to Ottawa in 1918 and when Cairine was in her thirties, a significant period of passage when many people redefine their goals. In Cairine's case, the doctor's remarks were enough to drive home the realization that life, for her, should involve more than marriage and raising children.

The new role that Cairine Wilson assumed saw her become a conscientious worker for numerous community and national organizations, such as the Victorian Order of Nurses and the Young Women's Christian Association. She also became the organizing genius behind the founding of the National Federation of Liberal Women of Canada in 1928 and the principal architect of the Twentieth Century Liberal Association, an organization of young Liberals that came into being in the early months of 1930. Despite these achievements, however, Cairine Wilson was virtually unknown outside Ottawa and Liberal party circles when she was appointed to the Senate.

Her elevation to the upper house on 15 February 1930 occurred almost four months after the judicial ruling that made her appointment possible: the landmark decision of the Judicial Committee of the Imperial Privy Council that women were "qualified persons" and therefore eligible to sit in the Canadian Senate. It was the direct outcome of a determined fight waged by Judge Emily Murphy and four other feminists from Alberta, who had petitioned the Supreme Court of Canada and then the Privy Council of Great Britain for a ruling on Section 24 of the British North America Act.

Emily Murphy's friends and supporters expected the redoubtable crusader to become the first woman elevated to the Senate. Instead, Mrs Murphy, a Conservative, saw the appointment go to Cairine Wilson, a dedicated Liberal, who had never participated in the suffrage campaign and who had never shown any interest in receiving a summons to the Red Chamber.

According to Mackenzie King's diary, several factors lay behind the prime minister's choice of Mrs. Wilson. First and foremost was the leading role that she had played in women's organizations. He had also been influenced by the fact that Cairine Wilson spoke



Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King on the steps of Laurier House, Ottawa, 1938, from his Christmas card for that year.

French (which she would use in her maiden address in the Senate), was in a position to help the Liberal party financially, and had been a "close friend of Lady Laurier's". The diary entry concluded: [she] "is a lady & there will be less jealousy of her than of any other person."

Mackenzie King might also have noted that he felt comfortable with his choice because of his long friendship with Cairine and Norman Wilson, who had frequently entertained him in Ottawa and at St. Andrews, New Brunswick, where their summer home was located. Equally, if not more important, Mrs. Wilson was a wealthy woman with high ideals and a social conscience, attributes the pious prime minister always found appealing in the female sex.

Although the choice of Cairine Wilson met with widespread approval, it was not without its critics. Some Westerners, for example, deplored the fact that neither Emily Murphy nor one of the other activists — such as Nellie McClung — involved in the "Persons" case had been appointed to the Senate.

Some may have resented Cairine Wilson's appointment, but it proved to be an excellent one. A hard-working senator, determined to help create a more humane world, she used her position to promote the interests of numerous causes close to the heart: those of women, children, education, preventive medicine, the League of Nations, refugees and, in time, the United Nations.

In the Senate she consistently adopted a left-of-centre position on social issues of the day, thereby placing herself firmly in the progressive ranks of her party. When, for example, a measure designed to widen the grounds for divorce made its debut in the Upper House in 1938, the senator spoke out in favour of more progressive divorce legislation. To Cairine Wilson's dismay, the Senate bill ultimately met with a resounding defeat in the House of Commons, even though it provided for only three new grounds for divorce in addition to the existing one of adultery.

As a senator, Cairine Wilson showed the courage of her convictions by not infrequently adopting positions opposed by her friend Mackenzie King. Such an occasion arose in March 1943, when she made an appeal for a universal program of family allowances, then a hotly debated topic. In doing so she clashed with the prime minister, who, before his conversion to the idea, was horrified by the costs and the imagined threats to individualism that such a program portended.

At no time, however, did Cairine Wilson take a more public stance against her leader's views than on 2 October 1938. On that date, in her capacity as the first and only woman president of the League of Nations Society in Canada, she issued a statement condemning the Munich Agreement. In condemning the accord, she pitted herself not only against Mackenzie King, but also against many other influential Liberals.

The senator also distanced herself from the values of the Canadian Establishment and other elites by embracing the cause of refugees, many of whom were Jews fleeing Nazi Germany. Indeed, the work that she did on behalf of refugees proved to be by far the most challenging and demanding of her entire Senate career, which also included the chairmanship of the Senate committee on Immigration and Labour.

Cairine Wilson had been president of the League of Nations Society in Canada for a year when she embarked on the most important campaign of her life: the fight to open Canada's doors to throngs of desperate refugees who were seeking to escape the Nazi tide and to build a new life in Canada. To help pry open these doors, she led the movement to establish the Canadian National Committee on Refugees (CNCR), which she headed for ten years (1938-1948) as its first and only chairman.

Unfortunately, when Senator Wilson took up the refugees' cause Canada was still mired in the Depression. As a result, many Canadians stubbornly opposed large-scale immigration, fearing that it would threaten already scarce jobs. Although refugees could have brought sorely needed skills and talents, they were not welcome — at least not by the Canadian government and a large part of the population.

Cairine Wilson worked tirelessly to educate Canadians about the contributions talented and educated refugees could make to Canadian society and to bring about a liberalization of Canada's immigration

Wilson family collection

Prime Minister and senator meet and converse near the entrance to the Senate, Parliament Hill, Ottawa, 1944. The photograph is autographed by Mr. King.

laws. She also lobbied hard to have individual refugees admitted to this country, frequently succeeding in this while losing the battle to bring about a more humane immigration policy.

Among the countless refugees that the senator aided were highly educated anti-Nazi Germans, Austrians and Italians, who had been transported from Britain across the submarine-infested Atlantic to Canada in 1940 and then interned in Canadian camps. Along with colleagues closely associated with her in the CNCR and representatives of the United Jewish Refugee and War Relief Agencies, she interviewed internees in the camps, helped to bring about an improvement in camp conditions, and secured the release of individual internees. After the war many of these refugees became Canadian citizens, providing Canada with one of its most remarkable pools of foreign-born talent.

In 1949 Cairine Wilson became the first woman to be appointed to the Canadian delegation to the United Nations General Assembly.

A life of service and accomplishment came to an end in March 1962. Today she is remembered as Canada's first woman senator, but there was another title that she earned and was proud to carry. To thousands of those she helped to build a new life in Canada, Cairine Wilson was "Mother of the Refugees".

Valerie Knowles is an Ottawa freelance writer.

The Mothers of Confederation

Life was a story of unending toil for many women in pioneer Canada

By Sydell Waxman

Canadian history alludes to women of the last century only incidentally, yet our country owes an enormous debt to those not immortalized with the "Founding Fathers." Our "Founding Mothers" led lives filled with endless toil, too numerous pregnancies, cumbersome dress and second class citizenship, but by the end of the nineteenth century a dramatic, courageous tale of "women's sphere" began to unfold.

The story began before confederation when there was a great demand for female labour. Newspapers, promoting the planned mass immigration, praised women as "invaluable as a sympathetic companion, an economical manager, an actual helpmate in the farm work, as a mother of future citizens and as a standard-bearer of civilization".

"I believe that never was a country better adapted to produce a great race of women than this Canada of ours, nor a race of women better adapted to make a great country"
— **Emily Murphy.**

Our Founding Fathers, not oblivious to the importance of the female role in the future of Canada, were very cautious about the quality of women immigrants. Although the Election Act of the Dominion of Canada stated that "No woman, idiot, lunatic or child shall vote," there was a steadfast belief that women were the cornerstone of family and nation. The values they would pass on to the young, it was unanimously agreed, should be British values since Canada "would be a nation that was British in outlook and character".

Long before this search for the ideal Canadian mother began, colonial women had cleared land, worked as loggers, owned and operated mines, hunted for meat and trapped for fur. They did this while raising families and they often kept journals about their pioneering lives. The 1820s saw a significant number of women working in "non-traditional jobs" such as silversmith, woodworker, coachmaker, lumberjack and mortician. "A shorthanded country" wrote one observer, "could not disdain womanpower".

Despite this past history of woman's work, Canada's late-nineteenth-century servant recruitment campaign began looking for the "best classes" of British women. Applicants were scrutinized to deterimine their moral character, respectability, job performance, attitudes, intelligence and physical health. These women were assured that as servants their work would not be difficult since Canada boasted labour-saving machines and varnished woodwork. In fact, the life of work left little leisure time. "It was nearly five o'clock before I had done my room, changed my working dress and was ready to enjoy my one hour 'off' during the day . . .", recalled one woman who had been a domestic servant in pioneer Alberta.

Most female immigrants embarked on the voyage to Canada with the belief, as one expressed it, that "they would lead not unpleasant lives at starting and speedily rise to better things." When they arrived, the women were sorted into groups by destination and taken to temporary shelters or hostels. Other women usually supervised the grouping of these new servants onto trains headed for distribution centers in Montreal, Winnipeg, Calgary, Regina, Edmonton and Vancouver. The uncomfortable and overcrowded trip from Montreal to Vancouver took five days, and rumours spread that women disappeared from the trains, no doubt into "white slavery".

Most found their way to be placed as servants in Canadian homes. For their services they often received as little as five dollars per month, with room and board.

Motherhood was thought to be the goal and primary social function of every Canadian woman. This socialization process, molding Canadian girls into potential wives and mothers, began early. They were encouraged to play with dolls until they were teenagers. According to *The Young Lady's Book* of 1876, games such as chess were not allowed because "Chess is not a game

EMIGRATION

Pioneer women helped carve farms and settlements out of the virgin forests of British North America.

much played by ladies as it requires rather more thought and calculation than women possess". The author of this book was a woman.

Many children were not allowed card games since card playing resembled gambling, but reading was encouraged. *The Young Lady's Book*, subtitled "A Manual of Amusements, Exercises, Studies and Pursuits", was meant to fill girls' leisure time. *The Holiday Album For Girls* of the same period contained moral stories of "ideal" little girls — thoughtful Maggie who helped an old lady off the train, Eva who was crippled but still managed to be happy and naughty Esther who would come to no good because she stayed in bed after she had been wakened by her mother. Meanwhile boys were reading about the glorious adventures of other lads in gold mines, on whaling ships, sailing the seven seas and mountaineering.

When children grew up and married the household cradle was rarely unoccupied, even though infant and maternal mortality was alarmingly high. The situation was not helped by primitive obstetric practices.

Once babies were delivered they were bathed and their umbilical cords rubbed with tallow and a light dusting of nutmeg. Babies were then dressed in layers of clothing, since swaddling had gone out of fashion in Canada by the nineteenth century. One last item was sometimes added if superstitious parents could afford it — a coral bead which was hung around the baby's neck. This was a charm to ward off the evil eye.

Gynaecology had developed into a medical specialty by the late 1800s. These "experts" considered themselves knowledgeable, not only in the medical realm of the female body, but related their unfounded expertise to female sexuality, female social roles and "female spheres".

Who would argue with the male experts? So women devoted their lives to children and found that moth-

Many immigrant women found work as servants in Victorian Canada, working long hours for low wages.

Pregnant again, a Western Canadian farm wife helps harvest the potato crop. Unending work and frequent pregnancies were part of the ordinary burden of pioneer women.

erhood led them from the cradle to the kitchen. Cooking became women's duty by birth and this formidable job included making all staples such as bread, butter, pickles, catsup and preserves. Fruits and vegetables were inconveniently canned on the hottest August days when the produce reached suitable ripeness.

Bread was made from wheat flour, with corn, rye and buckwheat being used occasionally. Pumpkins were an important mainstay, used for soups, pies and "pumpkin sass" — a type of molasses. Later apples replaced pumpkins as a major pie material, and by the end of the century plants imported from England produced gooseberries, raspberries, strawberries and currants.

Cooking and canning did not stop at the family's needs, for meals often included farm hands, especially at harvesting time.

Ella Sykes, a visiting English journalist, recorded this story of a prairie woman: "In shearing time, I had to cook for fifteen men . . . they needed five meals a day . . . I just got into the way of thinking nothing but how to get through the day's work".

Besides cooking, every housewife had her family formula for making ink, floor polish, silver cleaner, whitewash, rat poison, boot spray, shampoo, cold cream, tooth powder, hair tonic, soap and candles. Roots and herbs were stored for sickness because mother was often the family "doctor" with traditional remedies for most minor ailments.

Family life centered on the kitchen and the fireplace. The kitchen was at the back of the house so that the smell travelled outside. Not only were kitchen smells thought unpleasant, but it was believed they carried disease. Hot roasted coffee beans were carried around the house to kill the odours.

The front doors were reserved for strangers and special visitors, while all other traffic flowed through the kitchen. The floors were usually plain wood until the late 1800s when linoleum was invented. Tables

A few fortunate women in early Canada led lives of comfort and ease, in vivid contrast to their sisters enduring hardship on the land and in the servants' quarters.

were covered with oilcloth. The zinc sinks, home-helps and wives soon discovered, were difficult to clean.

Cooking was done traditionally on the fireplace and the poor continued to use this method long after the rich could afford huge iron ranges that burned coal and wood. These ranges, kept going all day and night, were a prized household possession. Fireplaces were not readily replaced by central heating and many saw the new heating discovery as the potential cause of family breakdowns. Fireplaces had not only been the cooking area, but the place where families gathered to keep warm, discuss the day's happenings, and share time together.

Almost everyone agreed on the favourite household treat — ice cream. It took a long time to prepare since a hot custard of milk, sugar, egg and vanilla had to be made first and then churned and cooled. Cream was put into a tin pail that was set in a large wooden pot packed with ice and salt. Willing helpers turned the handle for hours, adding new ice and salt from time to time.

It would seem that the cult of domesticity had enmeshed Canadian women in never-ceasing household chores. Ladies' magazines, edited and published by men, romanticized the role of the farmer's wife. In actuality, loneliness, alienation and despair were repeatedly expressed in written records kept by farming women. Statistics show disproportionate incidents of mental breakdown among that era's women.

The story of "Women in the 1900s", amazingly, does not end in domestic detail and despair. The great changes occurring in Canada by the end of the century affected women profoundly. Inventions such as the sewing machine and the bicycle brought not only labour saving devices but acceptable sport and leisure. Cities provided the important opportunity for women to meet and organize.

The first generation of Canadian social feminists appeared as early as 1860. As women moved from being predominately household servants into factories, school rooms and nursing homes, organizations began to develop. Local church groups, and benevolent societies grew with the towns and gave women the chance to move beyond their homes.

Motherhood and cooking, however, were still considered "women's sphere" and the groups proceeded with great caution and assurances that family balance would be upheld. Lady Aberdeen, wife of the Gov-

A prairie farm wife drives the oxen during hay-making, late nineteenth century.

ernor-General, an experienced diplomat, pointed out that Canadians needed "careful handling" on the "woman question". The National Council of Women of Canada, formed in 1893, could only advance after repeated guarantees of its loyalty to the ideal of a domesticated and conciliatory womanhood.

So these women, anxious to take an active part in society, concerned themselves with "acceptable" projects such as working girls, urban housing, children's recreation, and cultural improvement.

Medical care was another cause to which the National Council of Women of Canada directed its efforts. Lack of medical attention inflated the infant and maternal mortality rates. The Victorian Order of Home Helpers, a forerunner of the Victorian Order of Nurses, was founded in 1897. Having been taught techniques of household sanitation, the nurses set out for remote Canadian dwellings, bringing much-needed medical knowledge of sanitation and infant care. Still, they had to justify their jobs as nurses in the light of the ideal of domestic Canadian womanhood. This was accomplished by signing a contract denying independence. The contract stated that "a respectable and acceptable nurse was an ideal lady who showed wifely obedience to the doctor, motherly self-devotion to the patient and a firm mistress/servant discipline to those below the rung of nurse".

Women's groups knew they were treading on dangerous ground and facing hardened ideas about women, the family and the Canadian nation. They moved out of their homes into groups and activities with continuous caution and verbal justifications that their actions would in no way impede what they knew was their role and position in life. They even reassured the Canadian public with contrasts between "feminine" Canadian women and "argumentative, mannish, ill-mannered, fast" Americans.

Change had begun, as this editorial in the *Victoria Times* of 1893 verifies: "Ten years ago people were much more content to lead a vegetable life, troubling their heads but little over what are now considered to be the burning questions of the day. There was a stifling air of *laissez-faire* in those times, and a strong tendency towards the suppression and ridiculing of all women's higher aims and ambitions; but in this *fin-de-siècle* much of that is changed, and the ability of the gentler sex to cope with and successfully master many of the deeper problems of life is becoming an established and recognized fact".

These courageous women's groups succeeded in opening not only the eyes of many Canadians, but eventually the doors of the universities and professions. Confederation women are not in the famous "Founding Fathers" picture, but without their endless physical toil the country could not have developed. Against great social pressure, they did the ground-work for the suffrage movement as well as for other profound social changes, the effects of which are still being felt today. To forget the details of their lives is to forget an important part of Canadian history.

Sydell Waxman lives at Thornhill, Ontario. Her article on Canadian medical pioneer Emily Stowe appeared in the April/May 1992 issue of "The Beaver".

FROM DON MILLS TO PARADISE CRESCENT

Home Sweet Suburb

The great post-war migration

By J.M. BUMSTED

In September 1952 the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation opened Canada's first two television stations in Toronto and Montreal, and over the next two years extended its television coverage into seven other major metropolitan areas. Television was hardly a new technology. The British and Americans both had experimental television stations operating before the war, and the Americans had begun introducing comprehensive television broadcasting, with national network organization, in 1946. By 1952 *I Love Lucy*, American television's first nationally popular hit show, had been running for over a year. At the time of the introduction of television broadcasting in Canada only 146,000 Canadians owned television receivers (or "sets" as they were usually called), tuning to American border stations and using increasingly elaborate antenna systems to draw in distant signals. Most Canadians thus missed entirely the first generation of American television programming, broadcast almost exclusively live from the studio, and were able to tune in only as U.S. television moved from live to filmed programs and from New York to Hollywood. But if Canada got a slightly late start into life with the tube, it rapidly caught up. By December 1954 there were nine stations and 1,200,000 sets; by June 1955 there were twenty-six stations and 1,400,000 sets; and by December 1957 there were forty-four stations and nearly three million sets. The rate of set proliferation had been almost twice that of the United States, and the market for new ones was virtually saturated within five years.

Perhaps more than the automobile, or even the detached bungalow on its carefully manicured plot of green grass, television symbolized the aspirations and lifestyle of the new suburban generation of Canadians. Unlike other leisure-time activities that required leaving the home, it was a completely domesticated entertainment package that drew Canadian families *into* the home. Until the late 1960s most Canadian television sets were located in the living room. Particularly on weekend evenings in the winter, the only sign of life on entire blocks of residential neighbourhoods was the flickering dull glow of black-and-white television sets coming from otherwise darkened houses. The family could even entertain friends who were interested in the same popular programs. Some of what people watched was Canadian-produced, but most of it came from the Hollywood Dream Factory. Despite the Saturday-evening popularity of *Hockey Night in Canada*, which was first telecast in 1952, television drew Canadians into the seductive world of American popular culture. Everyone watched television, but perhaps none were more influenced by it than the young, whose perceptions and reading abilities were greatly affected by their being transfixed by an endless array of images.

After the war the serious housing shortage — there had been little new domestic building since the 1920s — and a spate of young couples starting their lives together led the government, through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), to promote suburban development, offering very cheap mortgages. The suburbs were built quickly by companies that had gained expertise during the war, and were often developed around a school. The municipalities then had to link these new communities to each other, and to the city, through roads and infrastructures. Suburbia was a physical place of detached and semi-detached houses with yards and lawns around the outskirts of a city, but it was also a rather complex constellation of expectations and values centred on the home, the family, and continued economic affluence.

In overall terms the trends for urban and rural residency established in the early years of the century continued through the period 1946 to 1972. Urban population steadily increased, both absolutely and as a proportion of the total, while the numbers of rural inhabitants remained relatively constant. Within the rural population, however, there occurred a massive decrease in the number of farm residents, from 3,117,000 in 1941 to 1,420,000 in 1971. Declining numbers of farmers was a national trend, most evident in these years in provinces still dominated by agriculture: Prince Edward Island, Manitoba, and

Saskatchewan. On PEI for example, the number of farms declined from 12,230 in 1941 to 4,543 in 1971. Farm depopulation was caused by no single factor. The continued inability of the farmer to make a decent financial return on labour and investment was undoubtedly one of the prime factors. Canadian farms got bigger and more mechanized in an attempt to compensate for low rates of return per acre, and many farm families gave up and got out when the older generation still left on the farm died. Farm land anywhere near cities became uneconomic to retain for farming, and most of Canada's finest agricultural land

of tinted plate glass to the world, as the International Style of architecture made its way to Canada. One of the country's most famous monuments in this style is a complex of rectangular towers of black steel and dark bronze-tinted glass, the Toronto-Dominion Centre (1963-9) in Toronto, designed by the German-American architect Mies van der Rohe. Within the world of faceless skyscrapers would come two fascinating developments. One was the virtual evacuation of the downtown area by human inhabitants after working hours. The other was the tendency of these working-hour inhabitants to turn inwards on the building com-

The Don Mills suburb near Toronto inspired similar developments across Canada.

— in the Fraser Valley in British Columbia and in southwestern Ontario — had been sold to speculators by 1971 or cut into hobby farm plots. Many former farm families discovered they did not have to move to enjoy brighter lights, for the outskirts of cities expanded in all directions into rural areas.

While Canadian cities grew significantly in size, little of that population growth occurred in the downtown areas or the traditional residential sections. The trend in the downtown core was just the reverse. Rising land prices made it uneconomic for land there to be used residentially, except for high-rise apartment blocks, which were less profitable uses of space than comparable office blocks and thus emerged only on the fringes of the downtown. Building upwards, the core of the business district produced those breathtaking skylines we have come to associate with the modern city. Gradually, beginning in the 1960s, they came to be dominated by buildings that showed vast expanses

plexes themselves, which were maintained at constant levels of temperature and humidity throughout the year, and contained below ground an extensive shopping mall, provision for all necessary services, and parking.

As might have been expected, the only real development strategies for Canadian cities in this period were those dominated by greed, the market, and some unspecified and almost wistful belief that progress was inevitable and would triumph in the end. City development, like most aspects of Canadian life, had been put on hold by the Depression and the war. There was a pent-up sense within local groups of architects, planners, and developers that making new things happen was positive, even at the cost of losing links with the city's (mostly Victorian) past. The result was the destruction of many wonderful old buildings in order to make way for new ones that were often undistinguished. Such a trade-off was made in Toronto when the city's first skyscraper, the majestic Temple Build-

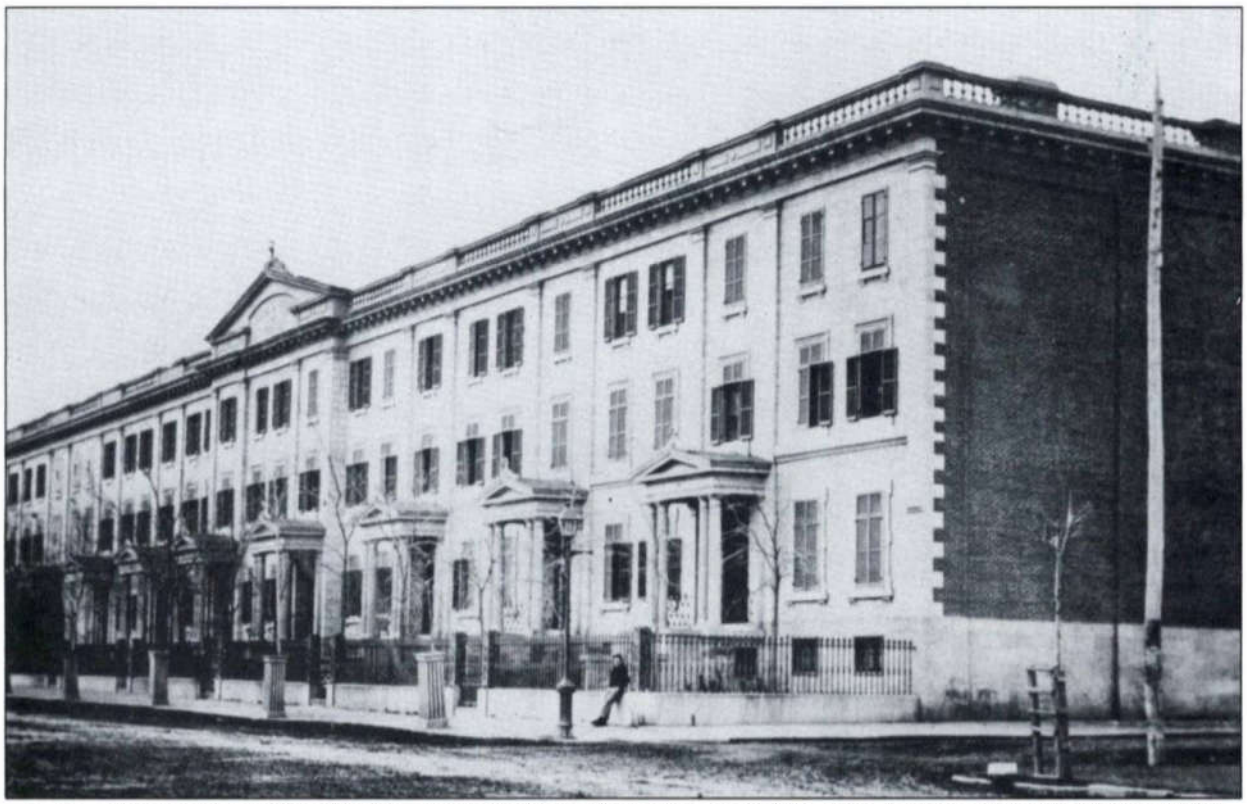
Reprinted with permission — Toronto Star Syndicate

The post-war generation was the first to spend hours watching anything that moved on the television screen and many parents and teachers were gravely concerned. The caption for this Duncan Macpherson cartoon reads, "O.K. Kiddies, Bedtime".

ing of 1895 at Richmond and Bay Streets, was demolished in 1970 to be replaced by two bland towers without any public character at all. (One such threatened demolition, that of Toronto's Old City Hall, was stopped in the 1960s as a result of a public outcry.) In Montreal there was much more indiscriminate destruction. For example, the handsome Georgian-style Prince of Wales Terrace of eight attached dwellings — commissioned by Sir George Simpson and finished in 1860 — was demolished in 1971, to be replaced by the ungainly juxtaposition of a tall hotel and a banal six-storey building to house a department of McGill University. Canadian cities, however, did not go so far with their bulldozers as the urban renewals of the United States and Great Britain, where hundreds of square miles of slum dwellings were razed with little idea of sensitive replacement. Canadian destruction on the whole was piecemeal rather than wholesale. One entire community, however, *was* demolished: Africville, an old working-class black community in Halifax was razed in 1965.

After World War II urban development in the Western world was dominated everywhere by an impatience to demolish (and relocate) old slums and ghettos, and in North America by a recognition that much of the desirable residential activity was in the suburbs. Many of the slum tenements of older cities were dreadful eyesores of deterioration, inhabited by recent immigrants and the poor; brand-new blocks of apartments, or bungalows, seemed a considerable improvement. Not until the early 1960s — perhaps beginning with the publication of Jane Jacobs' influential *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961) — was the case made publicly that any urban renewal that destroyed existing organic neighbourhoods and communities in the process was retrogressive. Academics joined some politicians, young professionals, and citizens' groups in insisting that any city planning that ignored the needs of people and neighbourhoods invited unforeseen damaging consequences.

Toronto probably went furthest in its rush to modernize because of the extent of its metropolitan growth. The model planned suburb of Don Mills was developed in the early 1950s; the city was associated with twelve suburban municipalities in 1953 to form Metropolitan Toronto. In 1954 the Yonge Street subway was opened;



In cities across Canada many fine old buildings vanished under the wheels of "progress". Many in Montreal mourned the loss of Prince of Wales Terrace (above), a Georgian row built by Sir George Simpson of the Hudson's Bay Company.

in 1964 it was extended by the east-west Bloor line. Toronto also built a series of bypass highways — the 401, the Gardiner Expressway, the Don Valley Parkway — to enable people to get quickly from one end of the metropolitan area to another. While not quite in the same league with Los Angeles, Toronto nevertheless was thinking in the same direction in terms of a freeway culture. With the ring-roads done, the developers moved to the inevitable inner-city connectors, such as the Spadina Expressway, which would give every resident ready access to the freeway system. But there were two problems. One was that superhighways created new traffic as much as they relieved old bottlenecks; by 1972 bypass highways like the 401 were multi-laned traffic jams of bumper-to-bumper vehicles at first during rush hours and eventually for almost the entire day. Improving connections between the city and its outskirts only prompted more people to move away or use the roads more frequently. The other problem was that freeways constructed in populated areas could be built only by tearing down existing housing and devastating neighbourhoods. An extended period of Toronto opposition finally managed to stop construction of a projected expressway in 1971, which brought to a symbolic end the period of unrestricted and unplanned expansion in the city. In Vancouver at about the same time, proposals to extend the Trans-Canada Highway into the city's centre, virtually demolishing many neighbourhoods — including the traditional Chinatown district — were fought to a standstill. By the later 1960s citizens' coalitions were at work in every Canadian city, attempting to control the developers who influenced most city councils and most city departments.

Urban development was orderly by comparison with what happened beyond existing settlement. New suburbs were created — usually well beyond zoning bylaws — by fast-talking developers who managed to convince rural municipal councils that population growth meant jobs (rather than new taxes and a totally changed community character). The principal attraction of the new suburbs was lower cost per square foot of house, which meant that land costs were kept down by not providing amenities (especially costly sewers) in advance. The ubiquitous septic tank (and the exceptionally green grass that grew above it) became the symbol of the true suburban bungalow. Leaving trees up in a developing subdivision cost more in building costs than knocking them down. So down came trees, although a few developers were willing to keep them around in return for a premium price for the lot. But in most suburban developments, planting new trees and shrubs (often in areas that had only recently been heavily forested) was the first outdoor task of the new home-

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Developments with tempting names sprang up in fields and along roadsides across the nation. This one near Toronto at least had trees.

The Spadina Expressway and Highway 401 meet near Toronto in a spaghetti tangle. Many Canadian cities resisted the urge to create freeways.

owner. Drawing up for any new block only a handful of floorplans — with roughly an identical number of bedrooms, floor area, and maximum mortgageable value — also saved money and made marketing easier. The number of amenities depended on price, and most builders were interested in the mass market at the lower end of the scale. The result was residential segregation based not on race or ethnicity but on number of children and ability to make mortgage payments.

No developer regarded the suburban creation of infrastructure — schools, hospitals, shopping centres, connecting roads — as part of his responsibility, and many buyers of the 1950s and 1960s would have shied away from any development whose community structure was predetermined. The trick was to sell houses to recent parents or the newly affluent — often the same people. The typical first-time suburban buyer was a young couple with two children, partly attracted to the suburb by the Canadian love of green grass, but mostly by cost. Marketing techniques tried to attract buyers by giving fantasy names to the developments themselves (Richmond Acres, Wilcox Lake, Beverly Hills) or to street names (Shady Lane, Sanctuary Drive, Paradise Crescent), but most newspaper advertisements concentrated on the price and down-payment required. Few buyers did much research into the surrounding amenities, most being influenced chiefly by internal house space and price.

Few suburbanites had any idea that they were the advance guard of a new Canadian lifestyle. Fewer still had had any real experience of suburbia, particularly those who were moving to developments well beyond the reach of sewers, libraries, cultural facilities, shopping, and urban transit. They had not deliberately abandoned the amenities of the city so much as they had been forced by the need for space to move beyond them. Their adjustment to new conditions became part of the major socio-cultural movement of the time.

The suburbs of the post-war period have acquired more than a bit of bad press, becoming exemplars of a vast identa-kit wasteland of intellectual vacuity, cultural sterility, and social conformity — Pete Seeger's "little boxes". They could be and sometimes were all those things, of course; but they were also the spawning ground of much of the revolt and rebellion of the 1960s.

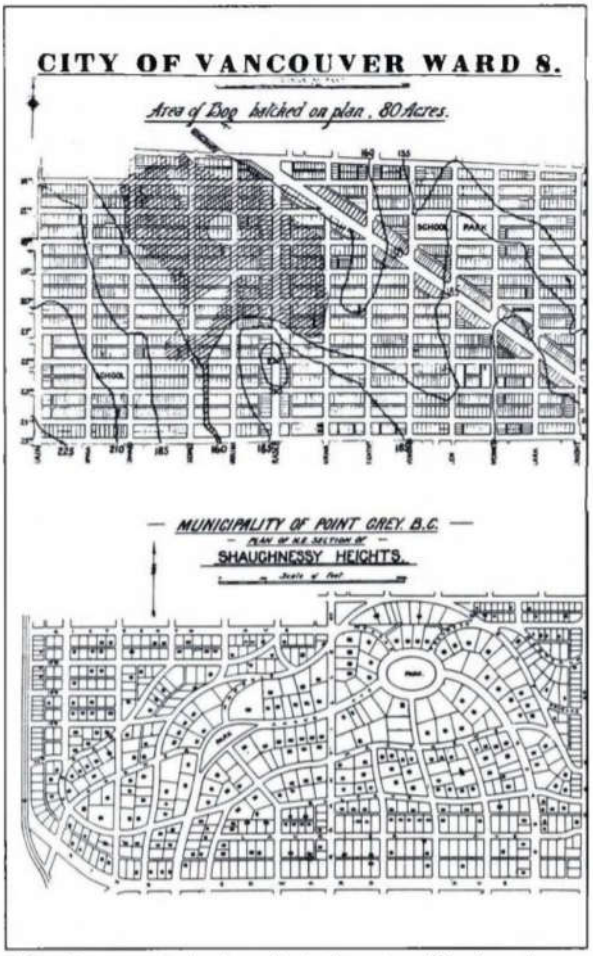
The beginnings of the modern suburb can be found in eighteenth-century London, evolving gradually as "the collective creation of the bourgeois elite." Suburbanization began as an English phenomenon, extending to North America in the nineteenth century. Europe and Latin America remained committed to their central cities, as any visitor to Paris or Buenos Aires quickly realizes. By the twentieth century the United States had become the international centre of suburbanization. Canada lagged behind the Americans, as in so many other matters, and at least before 1945 had never previously pursued the middle-class suburb with the singlemindedness of its southern neighbours. Although there were many examples of Canadian suburbs before World War II — such as Lawrence Park in Toronto, Westmount in Montreal, Crescentwood in Winnipeg, and Shaughnessy Heights in Vancouver — they were not normally as autono-

mously divorced from the urban centre as their American counterparts.

As might be expected, a resurgence of traditional domestic values after World War II was accompanied by a revival of Christian commitment, at least in terms of formal church membership and attendance. All the usual indices of revival, from attendance figures to enrolment in seminaries, increased in Canada after the war for both Protestants and Catholics. There was no evidence that the deep-rooted problems of modern Christianity — including its identification with an outmoded morality and its reliance upon belief systems that were being challenged by secular thought — profoundly influenced increased church membership and attendance. The religious upturn of post-war Canada, like the Baby Boom, was a temporary and largely cosmetic aberrant blip in long-term trends. Not surprisingly, much of the vitality of Christianity appeared to be in the prospering suburbs. As one observer has commented, ". . . between 1945 and 1966 the United Church erected 1,500 new churches and church halls, and 600 new manses — many of them handsome rambling broadloomed ranch houses."

Suburban houses became "homes", easily the most expensive physical object possessed by their owners. For most Canadian suburbanites, so much time and emotional energy was devoted to their house that it often seemed to possess those who occupied it. The house focused the life of the nuclear family at the same time that it permitted individual members to have their own private space. The kitchen, for example, was seldom large enough to serve as a family room, although children of each sex were entitled to his or her own bedroom. Basement recreation rooms were developed to provide "space" for growing children. Technology increasingly turned the home into a self-regulating cocoon of constant temperature and convenience. Most consumer investments added new furnishings and appliances, not all of which were immediately visible to the stranger. The replacement of coal with oil and gas furnaces governed by thermostats, the introduction of automatic hot water heating, even the beginning of domestic air-conditioning, all insulated the inhabitants from an earlier world in which domesticity required hard work and constant vigilance. Now air temperature could almost be taken for granted — no mean accomplishment in the harsh Canadian climate. Those suburbanites who worried about "getting soft" assuaged their concerns with summer camping-trips and roughing it at the cottage.

Life in suburbia depended on a clear understanding of family roles. Husbands were the breadwinners, often working far away from the home, while their wives were actually responsible for its daily functioning. Most Canadian women had chosen — at least at war's end — to remain out of the work-force in order to enjoy



A few cities created suburbs earlier in the century. The plans above show Vancouver's imaginative use of a bog (top) and designs for the exclusive suburb of Shaughnessy Heights, still one of the best addresses in the city.

marriage and child-rearing. They were reinforced in their decisions by articles in the women's journals exalting the roles of housewife and mother, and by advertising that appealed to their domesticity. At the same time that many women made "careers" as housewives and mothers, the sociologists of *Crestwood Heights: A North American Suburb* (1956) — a study based on Forest Hill Village, a wealthy residential area in Toronto — found a good deal of ambivalence over this decision and the values underlying it:

> The career of the woman in Crestwood Heights, compared with that of the man, contains many anomalies. Ideally, the man follows a continuous, if looping, spiral of development; the woman must pursue two goals and integrate them into one. The first goal has to do with a job, the second with matrimony and motherhood. The second, for the woman, is realized at the expense of the first; the man's two goals

Adolescents came into their own in the post-war period, with many suburban youngsters driving to school in their own cars for the first time.

combine, since matrimony is expected to strengthen him for his work, and at it.

Even younger women away at university were confused. One confessed to an interviewer:

> Why I want to work — because I hope to express my personality through struggle and achievement. Why I want to get married — because my real role in society is that of wife and mother. If I don't get married, I will feel insecure — I will have no clearly defined role in society. I will probably sacrifice career to marriage if the opportunity comes because the rewards of marriage are obvious, those of a career uncertain. In a way I envy those girls who only want to get married. They don't have to equate two conflicting desires.

For the female, suburbia was often little more than an arena in which this conflict was continually acted out.

Central to any suburban household were its children, around whose upbringing the lives of the parents increasingly revolved. The baby-boom generation of children were brought up in a child-centred environment, particularly in the home. Older standards of discipline and toughness in the parent-child relationship were replaced by permissiveness. New child-rearing attitudes were influenced by all sorts of factors, but found their popular expression in *The Pocket Book of Baby and Child Care* by Benjamin Spock, M.D., which outsold the *Bible* in Canada in the years after the war. Many Canadian and American mothers referred to Spock as "God". Canada had its own semi-official child-care manual, *The Canadian Mother and Child*, by Ernest Couture, M.D. — director of the Division of Child and Maternal Health of the Department of National Health and Welfare — which was distributed free by doctors to pregnant women. It was a forbidding and austere grey-covered book, filled with slightly out-of-date photographs and a prim, no-nonsense style. Couture's advice to fathers was typical. They needed to accompany their wives on first visits to the doctor at the beginning of pregnancy; to understand what prenatal and postnatal care meant; and to adopt an attitude that was "patient, kind, and forebearing" during pregnancy, for women suffered from mood changes they were "quite unable to control". He also stressed cleanliness and good sanitation for the home: "Plumbing and drainage should be kept in good condition. Nothing is more destructive to a home, and to health, than leaky pipes and drains." Small wonder Canadian parents, at least in English-speaking Canada, preferred the folksy conversational approach of the American expert to the bleak advice of the Canadian.

The triumph in Anglo-Canada of Dr. Spock over Dr. Couture says a good deal about Canadian versus American style in the realm of culture. The Canadian approach was firmly élitist, with useful information produced at the top and trickled down to the potential "client". The American approach was frankly democratic and commercial, with useful information mass-marketed to the "consumer". Spock's book was one of the earliest mass-marketed paperbacks and sold over

The "teenagers" of the 1940s and 1950s became an identifiable group with their own styles of dress and their own customs and music.

the counter at drug stores and supermarkets. In its pages the reader could find continual reassurance. Use your common sense, said Doctor Spock, for almost anything reasonable is okay. "Trust Yourself" was his first injunction. The good doctor came down fairly hard against coercion and forcing of the child, however. He was against early toilet training, for example, arguing, "Practically all those children who regularly go on soiling after 2 are those whose mothers have made a big issue about it and those who have become frightened by painful movements." While Spock seldom was this categorical about any child-rearing strategy — adopting a non-prescriptive position on breast-feeding versus bottle-feeding, for example — he was certainly not, in early editions, enthusiastic about working mothers:

> The important thing for a mother to realize is that the younger the child the more necessary it is for him to have a steady, loving person taking care of him. In most cases, the mother is the best one to give him this feeling of "belonging," safely and surely. She doesn't quit on the job, she doesn't turn against him, she isn't indifferent to him, she takes care of him always in the same familiar house. If the mother realizes clearly how vital this kind of care is to a small child, it may make it easier for her to decide that the extra money she might earn, or the satisfaction she might receive from an outside job, is not so important after all.

At the same time, Spock had more encouraging words for fathers than Doctor Couture, emphasizing that "You can be a warm father and a real man at the same time" while adding that it was "fine" for Dad to give bottles or change diapers "occasionally".

In opposing over-structured child-rearing practices, Spock may well have gone too far. But the post-war Canadian mother came to rely on his commonsensical advice. He saw that children passed through stages, and that once parents recognized what stage their child had reached, they could appreciate that seemingly incomprehensible behaviour and problems were quite common.

Spock's chapter on the adolescent, "Puberty Development", dealt with the sexual maturing of children, emphasized their awkwardness, and pointed out that most girls reached puberty two years ahead of boys. A full page was devoted to "Skin troubles in adolescence", particularly the pimples that the patent medicine folks labelled "teen-age acne". Spock was for washing the skin and against squeezing, which probably helps explain the folk wisdom of the era about those ubiquitous pimples. For suburbia, however, the adolescent was more than merely a creation of puberty. The "teenager" represented the emergence of a new generation that coincided with the maturing of the baby-boomers.

Canadian families had spending-power as the post-war economy began to boom.

The 22,000 Men and Women
who work at General Motors earn
$75 Million
a year
to spend in Canada
GENERAL MOTORS
PRODUCING MORE AND BETTER THINGS FOR MORE PEOPLE

Homes for everybody. As the fifties and sixties progressed, suburbia spread out across the land, covering fields and farms with "little boxes."

Both the elongation of the adolescent stage and its general significance took on new meaning in the two decades after the war. A general extension of the school-leaving age (and the expectation of suburbia's parents that children would continue their education beyond legal requirements) combined with the new affluence and permissiveness to produce large numbers of adolescents with considerable spending power. In English-speaking Canada teenagers became avid consumers — a recognizable market for fast food, popular music, acne medicine, and clothing fads.

For the new term "teenager", an English-language neologism, there is no equivalent in French. Obviously "adolescence" — the word is the same in both languages — does not carry the same cultural freight. French Canada has never had a "teenage problem", but rather a *"problème de jeune"*, a quite different matter. It has also tended to view the suburb in physical rather than in cultural terms. In the autobiographical *Nègres blancs d'Amérique* (1968) / *White Niggers of America* (1971), the radical Québécois Pierre Vallières (b. 1938) — who was jailed on charges connected with his FLQ activities and wrote his book in prison — suggests that men like his father had their own suburban fantasies:

> If only Madeleine [Vallières's mother] can agree to it, he said to himself. . . . We'll be at peace. The children will have all the room they need to play. We'll be masters in our own house. There will be no more stairs to go up and down. . . . Pierre won't hang around the alleys and sheds any more. . . . The owner was prepared to stretch the payments out over many years. . . . Life would become easier. . . . He would enlarge the house. A few years from now, Madeleine and the "little ones" would have peace and comfort.

And so in 1945 the Vallières family moved to Longueuil-Annexe: "the largest of an infinite number of little islands of houses springing up here, there, and everywhere out of the immense fields which in the space of a few years were to be transformed into a vast mushroom city."

♦

This article is an excerpt from "The Peoples of Canada: Postconfederation History" by J.M. Bumsted, published this autumn by Oxford University Press. A companion volume, "Preconfederation History", has also been published.

The Calgary Oral History Project

Listening to the Past

By Shane P. Carmody

Most people have memories of listening to a grandparent tell stories about the "olden days". Many of us later regret that we didn't take the time to talk more about the past or write down some of the tales. Few of us realize that these memories are often richly coloured fragments of the patchwork that is Canada's history. Oral history allows us to keep those fragments for future generations by recording them on tape, allowing researchers to piece together the fabric by listening to the past.

Over the winter and spring of 1992 a team of researchers conducted a very successful oral history project in Calgary. The project was supported by a grant from the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation, and could be easily repeated in many communities across Canada.

The project begins with a simple question: What was Calgary like in the years between the two World Wars? Establishing a starting point is very important. An oral history, like any history, has to have a clear focus. In this case the researchers are most interested in the lives of ordinary Calgarians. The time period is deliberately chosen for a simple reason. The end of World War I and the beginning of World War II are major events — likely to be very clear in the memories of the people interviewed.

The years are also important in the history of Calgary. They are the years in which the first full generation of people born in the city matured and established families of their own. Many of the people interviewed are the children or grandchildren of pioneers, and in a very real sense it is this generation that created Calgary, that gave it its special character and place in Canada.

Having established a focus and purpose, the next step is to develop a clear method. As a simple starting point we form a set of standard questions. These questions include such things as date of birth, and where the person was born; where they came in the family; what the occupation of their father was, and so on. These questions serve two purposes. They ensure that all the interviews in the collection have the same standard information, and that they lead in a comfortable and natural way to the kind of question and answer conversation that the interview seeks to record.

Focus, purpose and method established, it is time to find the people to interview. Several approaches can be used. One simple way is to write the retirement homes in the area. Many have social clubs or therapists that are happy to help co-ordinate people who wish to participate. Meals on Wheels or The Victorian Order of Nurses often know of housebound elderly people who may want to have a talk about the old days. The most useful, and certainly in the experience of the Calgary Oral History Project, the most effective way of finding people to interview is to have an article about the project in the local newspaper. The *Calgary Herald* ran a story about the project, and as a direct result nearly one hundred people called to express interest in participating.

Oral history projects can be of great importance as community-building exercises. Older people welcome the interest shown in their memories, and it is good to pay tribute to them for their efforts, struggles, triumphs and disappointments. And there is, of course, the tangible outcome, the completed set of interviews, permanently recorded on tape, ready for researchers to use in reconstructing the past. There are also the unexpected gems. The Calgary team found some manuscript accounts of early life on the prairies, and some valuable collections of photographs and memorabilia. Many of these are now safely stored in the Glenbow Museum, which was happy to help with the project and to provide a place to store the collection when it was complete.

● The following extract is from an interview with Mrs. Anele Jenkins. Mrs. Jenkins was born in Lithuania in 1906. Her father emigrated to Canada and worked for the CPR for many years, travelling back to Lithuania to visit his family. In 1913, when he had established himself in Southern Alberta, he sent for his family to join him. This is the extraordinary story of their emigration:

> Mum was annoyed with me when we were in Germany waiting to board our ship, and she clipped

me with the back of her hand. Her ring hit the corner of my eye and my eye became inflamed. We had our passage booked on the ship, but immigration wouldn't let us through because my eye was red and they thought I had something wrong with it, so we had to take the next ship which sailed two weeks later.

We had notified Dad we were coming on the first ship. Well that ship went down with all on board and nobody was saved. Dad got the news and he was just sick, he thought that was his family all gone.

However, we arrived and we got on the train in Montreal. We got to Winnipeg and the conductor told Mum that her pass had run out and he wouldn't let her go any further. You see the delay in waiting for the second boat had made the pass run out.

She could speak Russian, which was fortunate, because the porter on the train could speak Russian, so he interpreted and he told her that she had to get off in Winnipeg and go to the CPR Terminal and get her pass renewed. She did that without speaking a word of English. Ske kept meeting people who could speak Russian or Lithuanian.

Mom had wired Dad from Montreal and told him that we were coming on the first train. Well that train went off a bridge somewhere into a river. So he just sat down and he was ready to be tied — that was twice his family was a goner. He didn't know, of course, that we were delayed in Winnipeg overnight and that we would be on the next train.

So the next day he waited — he kept hoping we might be on another train. Crowfoot was just the flag station and Mom told the conductor that's where she had to get off. She was pretty sharp. She saw Crowfoot go by and the train didn't stop so she started making a big fuss and of course the train went on right through. It didn't stop. So Dad thought we weren't on it, you see. He had kept hoping we might be on the train. Anyway he thought, oh well they're gone for sure this time.

The train went a mile past Langdon and it started backing up because Mom made a big fuss. "You have passed my station you see". I don't know how she let the conductor know but she waved her hands and pointed to her pass. So he stopped the train and backed it up and we got off with all our luggage. We couldn't get off at the platform because they stopped the train before we got to the platform and we got off at the cinder side. Oh I slid down this cinder side and skinned my shins but anyway we were here.

I couldn't understand why Dad was crying when we met him.

● May Henderson was born near Nanton in 1916. She moved with her family to Calgary in 1927 and completed high school and then teacher training at Normal School. By the time she graduated from Normal School it was the middle of the Depression, and there was no work for teachers, so May went to Commercial School — this is the story of her first job:

I was at Commercial School, and I got a call from the principal of the Teacher's College to tell me that they had a school for me. Well I couldn't turn that down because I may never get another chance, so I took this school, which was a way up north east of Edmonton, which was some awful experience I'll tell you.

I went on the train and it just stopped at every little place. I got to the place and I got off the train and there was nothing there but a building to get you out of the cold and over the other side a little store and it was ten thirty at night. A lady came up to me and asked me if I was the new school teacher and I said yes, so we went and got in a democrat and we drove many miles. We got out of the democrat and we went down into a dug out place where there was a welcoming committee. This would be about midnight, and they served us a real treat. It was ice cold and they served us ice cream!

Then we got into a sleigh made from an old car and we went another number of miles and we finally got to this place and by now it was two o'clock in the morning. My room was a little room that was off the living room and it was six feet wide by about eight feet, and it was slab walls with about a half inch between each slab, with the bark and everything on them. I had a camp cot for a bed, I really mean a camp cot, you know the wooden thing with just a canvas. There was the bed and my trunk at the other end. Needless to say I was pretty upset about it all, and I had to go to school the next day.

The school was three miles through the bush, and I went with a boy from the family who was in grade nine and he took me to the school. I got to the school and the school was made of logs and chinked with moss. There were thirty kids and I think there were supposed to be fifteen kids, and there were very few desks only for the grade nine kids. For the others there were big long slabs of wood with long slab seats. A little tiny blackboard on the wall, and I had thirty kids and no books, no duplicating machine or anything. I had made my own duplicating device. You put a gel in a cookie tin and that was the thing for duplicating material [Hectograph]. There wasn't enough room on the board so you couldn't put grade one to nine work on the board — there was no room, there was nothing.

I was there about a week and I knew I couldn't survive that. I couldn't eat, I had to come home with the boy because I would get lost, so I couldn't stay and do work, and I had to go with him in the morn-

Lewis B. Foote Collection/Manitoba Archives

Immigrant Family

ing — I just felt that I absolutely couldn't cope. So I told them I was going to go back to Calgary and the lady was pretty upset and she said "I'll have your certificate taken from you" and I said "that's fine — I don't want a certificate if this is what a certificate gives me to do". Seven hundred dollars a year I was going to get if I stayed there. So anyway I left and an old chap came and picked me up on a buckboard and drove me into the town of Dap. He was a really nice old chap and I said "Oh I really feel terrible.".

"Don't feel badly" he said "You're the third teacher this year and the neighbouring school has had five".

● Gwen McVeigh was born in Calgary in 1916, the third child in a family of six. Her parents came to Calgary in 1905 on their honeymoon. Her mother had taught bookkeeping in Montreal, and taught the principles of auditing to her father, which helped him secure a job as a travelling auditor for the Federal government. Her father was away from home a lot, and these absences combined with his habit of gambling in pool halls meant that the family was very poor. Gwen's mother rose above the poverty, provided her family with a home and helped all her children to get an education through to grade twelve. This is her story:

We had a really tough time, we didn't have very much money, fortunately I guess in those days, look-

Glenbow Archives

Calgary women and children joined in the fight to clean up the saloons of the frontier city.

ing back, things were really cheap, but we still didn't have any money. I remember my older brother got a job delivering groceries on a bicycle, my other brother got a job after school working in the butcher's shop, and he would go and deliver all the orders after school and then go back and clean up, and so that helped my mother.

— So the money they earned from their part time jobs went back into the family to help run the household?

Yes, and my mother, she'd make candy, and my brother who worked in the grocery store would get small paper bags and we'd fill the bags with candy and then my older brother would go out in the neighbourhood and sell them. My mother did beautiful embroidery work and crocheting, and she used to make doillies and runners and everything, and my brother would take them and sell them.

We didn't see much of my father, he was a professional pool player, and all the money he earned went toward that. He gambled it away.

My mother decided that was enough. So she bought a house, she made the arrangements, borrowed money from the bank, and she took in boarders. She took in five young men who were attending what is now called the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, it was called the Tech in those days.

When my dad came home and found out that my mother had bought the house and what she intended doing he just threw up his hands and walked out and that was it. I was twelve and my sister was five and we had yet to go through school and be trained for whatever we were going to work at.

My mother would make my brother's suits for them. My aunt in Montreal would send a trunk load of clothes in the fall, it was used clothing from the family, and my mother would wash it and bring it in and that is what she made the boys' suits from and our coats. ♦

Shane P. Carmody worked on the Calgary Oral History project. "The Beaver" would like to hear about other Canadian oral history projects with a view to publishing a series of brief personal recollections.

Visions of Conquest

By John Ayre

STOLEN CONTINENTS
The "New World"
Through Indian Eyes Since 1492
By Ronald Wright. Viking, Toronto, 1992. 424 pp., illus. $29.99.

Despite the best efforts of publishers to promote the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's landfall, it is all rather passing us by like Comet Kohoutek: so much promised, so little delivered. There is poetic justice in this, of course. Even the most conservative of North American aboriginals have long taken umbrage at the notion that just because Columbus was a European, he had a natural right to "discover" and claim for a distant crown continents which were already impressively populated.

In *Stolen Continents* Ronald Wright sets out to administer the necessary antidote. His title suggests a crime story, his subtitle a rebalanced historical vision. Certainly on the first score he impressively narrates the merciless wounding by white intruders of five major aboriginal cultures, Aztec, Maya, Inca, Cherokee and Iroquois.

As might be expected, he starts with Cortes's invasion of Mexico which was nervy, bloody and astonishingly successful. Wright has made the Spanish look like the Darth Vaders of their time and the evidence is that wherever they went in the New World they were rather stupid pirates, initially interested in plundering rather than instituting rational processes of colonization and mercantilism. The aboriginals who survived the terrible plagues of Old World disease which the Spanish brought were shamelessly abused and robbed or pushed aside. Wright outlines the wreckage: "One pictures these survivors — elderly, scarred and blinded by smallpox, maimed by Spanish steel — gathering behind closed doors late at night to beat the carved drums, call upon their fallen kings, and relive the battles they won and lost."

Wright acknowledges the reason for Spanish coarseness. They had spent the last seven centuries battling the Moors out of their peninsula and they never, it seems,

Institut d'Ethnologie, Paris

The capture of Tupa Amaru, last king of the Inca, 1572.

found time to get out of their "Road Warrior" gear. Wright notes the horrible implications today, especially in places such as Guatemala which still maintain a medieval Spanish mentality which is both harshly racist and brutal.

The problem however is that in his enthusiasm to show the Indian as righteous victim, Wright often forgets that neither the Spanish nor their English and French successors farther north invented evil. If Old World disease unquestionably devastated New World people, it had a decidedly bleak track record in Europe itself. Europe also suffered — but survived — nasty invaders, even its very own blond, blue-eyed Visigoths and Vikings. In short, this is not quite the pat racial story it may seem. Likewise, if the torching of the libraries of the Aztecs and Mayas represented a cultural catastrophe, so was that of the scrolls of Alexandria. Again, the West managed to survive and eventually surge ahead. While this may smack of the social Darwinism which Wright cautions against, it is true that rebirth after calamity is more than either dumb luck or an unseemly pact with the devil. Wright actually implies this by focussing precisely on the five aboriginal cultures which have shown signs of resilience.

With the later stories of the Cherokee and Iroquois, there is a little more shading, the Indians a little more fallible with ill-advised alliances with the wrong side here or there of contending whites, whether British, French, American or Canadian. Certainly with consideration of a brutal but little known Canadian police action against the Six Nations' parliament in 1924 and later in 1959, and the hounding of a leader, Deskaheh, Wright brings the story a little too close for comfort. Euro-Canadians step into line with the conquistadors. With rage over the Mohawk standoff at Oka still fresh in the mind, this association was clearly deliberate. Canadian smugness takes a well-deserved bruising here.

So given the tendency for this dreary cycle of abuse, what is to be done? Wright makes the point that even though these five major groups still live in the shadow of Western liberal civilization, each represents a culturally autonomous entity today. Their cultures have not disappeared in five hundred years and are not about to. He emphasizes the

point by adding a photo of a contemporary Andean man in archaic clothes blowing a conch shell. Even the harshly intolerant Spanish could not get rid of this man, nor can we. But cultural integrity goes a lot farther than costume drama. Wright points out that the aboriginal land claims are not wild fantasies but have clear legal valdity. The Mohawks never ceded lands and were never told they were anything but valued allies. This raises the intriguing possibility that by re-establishing political autonomy, aboriginal cultures could develop on the lines of, say, Japan which maintains archaic Shinto traditions while Westernizing in technological areas. Wright sees the strongest indications of this potential in Mexico.

Densely written, *Stolen Continents* covers an amazing amount of territory. While I envy Wright's audacity and range, I do quarrel with his presumption, set out in the subtitle and foreword, that his book represents a specifically Indian view. With surprising regularity Wright quotes or summarizes such basic European sources as Bernal Diaz. The camera is almost always focussed on the hand holding the whip. While we often see the back welts of aboriginals, we don't consistently penetrate their minds. The reason for this is obvious. Aboriginal accounts are scarce. Except for the splendid Florentine Codex and Xahil accounts, those which have survived are often recorded in the high rhetoric of complaint. This is particularly so in the Cherokee and Iroquois sections. While this might be good for feelings of indignation, it is not much good for historical narrative which insists on interesting and significant detail. As a result, Wright's narrative dips and weaves according to available sources which he earnestly quotes but does not always show to be absolutely crucial. Ironically in the end, Wright is best when he is outlining the sins of the usurpers. Since the sins are so many, so great, and so often suppressed in Western minds, his book is a welcome achievement.

John Ayre, who is working on a book about Inuit art, is the author of "Northrup Frye: A Biography". He lives in Guelph, Ontario.

A Life in the Wild

By Clarence Tillenius

FROM PRAIRIE TO TUNDRA AS TRAPPER AND GAME WARDEN
Memoirs of Joe Robertson

By Joe Robertson, self-published, Dauphin, Manitoba, 1992. 500 pp., illus. $25.00.

A 14-year-old boy on a lonely trapline in the Northern Manitoba wilderness, sleeping by his campfire in the snowbound forest with toboggan and his four sled dogs his only company, his weapon an ancient and obsolete .57 Snyder black powder rifle for which he had but three cartridges to do him for the winter — so begins the story of Joe Robertson whose account of his 60 years' involvement with Northern Canadian wildlife must surely be a classic of its kind.

Endowed by nature with a keenly observant and analytical turn of mind, even though the desperate conditions of Manitoba farm life in the 1920s and early 1930s denied him schooling beyond grade four and sent him out to a trapper's life to help support his family, Joe by sheer determination managed to educate himself and in doing so gained a phenomenal familiarity with the Northern life he here describes.

His book resists easy classification. Without literary polish, without style, without affectation, it is the life story, simply and frankly told, of a remarkable man.

It is a book that ought to be read by any and all who want to learn at first hand the complexities of life in the Northern forests and frozen tundra.

Because of the nature of a bureaucratic government with its "chain-of-command" protocol, it is often difficult — if not impossible — for the harmful or even devastating effects on people, wildlife or even on the land itself resulting from mistakes of policy conceived and dictated by "ivory-tower" planners at the top to be laid before them by workers in the field. That is why this day-by-day account of more than 60 years spent in the field by a keen and observant participant is so valuable.

The year 1929 was for the teenage boy the beginning of his strenuous years on the trapline. Successively a trapper, a dog-driver, a sailor, a fisherman, fishing guide and mink rancher, he graduated in time to being a fish inspector, a supervisor of R.T.L. (Registered Trap Lines) and eventually a senior game warden patrolling a widely scattered web of Northern communities.

The "financial rewards" in 1939 are revealing: " . . . Lorne Phinney,

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game supervisor, offered me a job as temporary game guardian to assist the game guardian in supervising the first crop of muskrats to come off the government Summerberry Muskrat ranch. I was to have an assistant: our *pay* was being allowed to trap four hundred and fifty muskrats. This was one hundred and fifty pelts more than the regular trappers were allowed. It was my responsibility to trap the rats, pelt them, dry the skins, and turn them in to the government who were to sell them in a 'lot' to get the best price. I was provided with an eighteen-foot canoe and a two-and-a-half horsepower outboard motor to patrol the rivers and streams in an assigned area following breakup."

World War II went by with Joe serving a three-year stint as a service policeman with the R.C.A.F. At war's end he became game and fish warden at Cranberry Portage, Manitoba, opening a new phase of his career.

Conditions of a trapper's life in these Northern districts were harsh: "Henry had married Mary Anderson, a Chipewyan from Churchill with three children, Marie, Eva, and Betty. Her previous husband had frozen to death on a trapline from Caribou Lake Post to Churchill. Henry took his family to his trapline on South Knife Lake. When I arrived they had one child, Tommy, aged two-and-a-half months. They went on to have three more children; Wilfred, Bertha and Bobby. A Chipewyan girl had been brought from Churchill to be company for Mary in this isolated place. They all lived in a small ten-foot one-room cabin."

Nor were conditions easier for field men: "On April 24th my long-time friend and fellow officer Charlie Morrish drowned while on patrol in the marsh on a J5 snow vehicle. He broke through the ice and there was no escape hatch and he could not get out. Charlie was an outdoorsman with long experience in many travel conditions but a bit of bad ice and a machine without an escape hatch took his life."

Throughout his career Joe continually stressed the vital importance of the involvement of aboriginal peoples in all phases of wildlife protection or management. He recalls: "The management of barrenground caribou was another area in which the native people of northern Manitoba co-operated in a conservation program. In the early 1950s when I first visited the settlements in the caribou winter range I was shocked at the magnitude of the kill, the waste, and the careless use. Dog teams were fed caribou in areas where fish was available for dog food. Inexpensive .22-calibre rimfire ammunition was used to kill caribou, but it resulted in a loss of approximately sixty percent of the animals shot.

Following a few meetings with band leaders to bring them more information on the caribou than was available to them in these isolated communities, they soon expressed interest in conserving the caribou".

It is of revealing significance that Joe, who for years had the responsibility for controlling the decimation by wolves of the caribou herds with poison, trapping and shooting from aircraft, had at the same time a strong fellow-feeling for wolves as an integral part of wild nature. Though his work earned him the nickname "Mr. Wolf" when he published a well-researched and useful book *The Grey Wolf*, his sympathetic understanding of wolf nature is revealed in this description of a wolf pup he bought from a trapper and trained as a sled dog: "A wire pen had been made for the pups and after a few days I decided to put the wolf pup in with them. This breed of husky dog was very feisty and the pups even at that tender age were already trying to establish a pecking order with their little tails curled over their backs. When the wolf pup was introduced into the pen the pups took one smell and dropped their tails and huddled in the corner of the pen. The wolf pup was so happy that he rushed in among the four pups licking their faces. The husky pups that had shown fear at first scent of the wolf soon sorted themselves out and realized that there was no danger from this ungainly looking fellow. Within a couple of days they had accepted Long Tooth and soon had him rolled over on his back while they showed their dominance. During the year I had the wolf I never once saw him try to dominate any of the other pups even though he grew to almost twice their size, and he was always submissive to the older dogs."

Clarence Tillenius is a Manitoba wildlife artist.

Copies of this book can be ordered from the author at 109 Davidson Ave. West, Dauphin, Manitoba R7N 0C9.

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Traders on the Northwest Coast

Keith T. Carlson

OTTER SKINS, BOSTON SHIPS & CHINA GOODS
The Maritime Fur Trade of the Northwest Coast, 1785-1841

By James R. Gibson, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal/Kingston/London, 1992. (Published simultaneously in the U.S. by University of Washington Press). 422 pp., illus. $39.95.

It has long been recognized that the early history of the Pacific Northwest Coast is synonymous with the history of contact between Euroamerican fur traders and native people, but up to now it was generally believed that this aspect of White-Indian relations came to an ephemeral end in the mid-1820s. James Gibson's new book with its emphasis on hitherto undocumented Russian and New England sources clearly demonstrates that coastal trading continued at least until 1841.

Through contact initiated by the explorations of the Spaniard Juan Perez, and later, Englishmen like Captain James Cook, the Northwest Coast quickly became the "El Dorado" of late eighteenth-century Bostonian and British maritime entrepreneurs. Recognizing the financial potential of the "triangle of trade", vessels arrived on the coast with Western trade goods which they exchanged with the Indians for sea-otter pelts. These same ships and crews then travelled to the Chinese port of Canton, where hard-nosed capitalist Han merchants converted the "soft gold" into tea, silk and porcelain destined for elite shops in America or Britain. Neither the Indians, the Chinese, nor the Western traders believed they were victims or perpetrators of exploitation, each confident that the goods they extracted from the other far outweighed the value of the commodity lost.

The sea otter was initially viewed as a limitless resource, but as early as 1800 its virtual extinction from the waters around Nootka Sound — the traditional focal point of the trade — caused traders to abandon Vancouver Island in favour of the Queen Charlotte Islands and the adjacent mainland. Here Haida, Tlingit, and Tsimshian Indians assumed the role of middlemen, taking beaver and other pelts from their inland neighbours and exchanging them with the "King George" and "Boston" men. By the late 1820s and early 1830s the whole approach to the fur trade was again altered. All three markets in the trade triangle were becoming saturated and each group (particularly the Northwest Coast Indians) drove harder deals, holding out for prices that a few years earlier would have seemed impossible. Likewise, the Hudson's Bay Company offered further impetus to change. Financially and spiritually renewed after its 1821 amalgamation with the North West Company, the H.B.C. began deficit trading with the Indians in an attempt to drive the "Yankees" from the coast. The HBC also established permanent trading posts along the coast, compelling New England vessels to spend up to five consecutive seasons on the Northwest Coast in order to show even marginal profits. It is no surprise that the American response was to broaden the scope of their trade to include supplying isolated Russian American Company establishments in Alaska.

While the focus of Gibson's work is the issue of contact between Euroamerican traders and Northwest Coast Indians, he incorporates enough statistical and anecdotal material concerning the Hawaiian (Sandwich) Islands and Canton to broaden the book's appeal beyond students of Northwest Coast history. He demonstrates that without Hawaiian ports for restocking provisions, providing crew members (Kanakas), and supplying prostitutes, the Northwest trade would have been far less successful financially — if not morally. Conversely, Canton often proved a trader's nightmare. If the New Englanders were lucky enough to evade murderous river pirates on the Hong Kong delta, they found still other obstacles in their way upon reaching Canton, for, despite the great demand for furs among the Chinese elite, the Imperial government's "firm belief in the superiority of its civilization rendered foreign trade unimportant, and — to some — undesirable". The Chinese believed any "contact with 'foreign devils' would sully Chinese culture." Only the unrelenting persistence of the "barbarian entrepreneurs" convinced the Sun of Heaven to "grudgingly allow foreign trade" to continue with the "uncivilized and troublesome inferiors."

Notwithstanding the obvious merits of *Otter Skins, Boston Ships, and China Goods* it is to be lamented

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that Gibson's work falls far short of its potential. While Gibson correctly criticizes features of the revisionist interpretations of Northwest Coast historian Robin Fisher, his work is marred by an overall lack of analysis. Rather than developing significant interpretation of his own, he falls back on the stoic 60-year-old analysis of F.W. Howay and his protégés. Apparently content with simply demonstrating that the fur trade extended beyond 1826, Gibson does not explain the implications of this discovery for our understanding of the development of Indian culture. Indeed, in his zeal to fill his pages with countless quotations from ships' logs and diaries, he completely neglects the contributions of anthropologists to this field. We find little distinction made between the cultures of the various native linguistic groups on the coast. Information found in the historical record concerning the Haida is boldly applied to the Nootkan cultural group and even the Chinook societies of the Columbia River region. Such simplistic blanket interpretations of the native people runs contrary to the increasingly sophisticated publications of the past decades. Interestingly, insights found in Gibson's own recently published articles dealing with such topics as the spread of infectious disease among Indian communities would have made valuable contributions to his work.

Overly preoccupied with his discoveries of lost American diaries, and Russian records, Gibson permits himself to make elementary and fundamental errors in his presentation of known sources. Throughout the work the American ship *Jefferson* under Captain Josiah Roberts is constantly referred to as having over-wintered in Clayoquot Sound in 1793-94, when in fact the vessel spent the winter months in a cove in Barkley Sound. Likewise, Gibson claims the crew of the ship *Columbia* opened fire, killing eleven Indians in a canoe in Esperanza Inlet, Clayoquot Sound, when in reality Esperanza Inlet is over 70 miles north of Clayoquot. Similarly, Gibson accepts as gospel the 1792 diary entry of a young American

Male sea otter, 1778, drawn by John Webber, from "A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean" by James Cook and James King, London, 1784.

mate aboard the *Columbia* stating that the Clayoquot village of Opitsit was razed to the ground, while most contemporary scholars recognize that the writing was more likely the fantasy of a young boy than historic fact.

Further evidence of Gibson's sloppiness is his blind acceptance of Dr. S.W. Jackman's published contention that Boston fur trade notable William Sturgis was the author of a journal kept while on board the vessel *Eliza* in 1799. Had Dr. Gibson actually absorbed the diary it would have been obvious that Strugis had already transferred off the *Eliza* four days prior to the diary's ending, and thus could not have been the author. It is little wonder then that Dr. Gibson finds a change of attitude between the alleged early writings of Sturgis when compared with his latter correspondence, for they were written by two separate people.

Eagerly awaited as the new "Bible" of Northwest Coast history, it is a sad commentary on Gibson's work that the aging publications of F.W. Howay are still the definitive sources in this field. To the lay person wanting a readable overview of the fur trade Gibson's book will suffice, but academics will have to wait for someone else to put together an accurate and insightful analysis of the Northwest Coast fur trade.

Keith T. Carlson is an historical researcher and archival analyst specializing in Northwest Coast and Native history. He lives in Victoria, British Columbia.

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By The Dawn's Early Light

By Bruce Wishart

AMATEURS, TO ARMS!
A Military History of the War of 1812

By John R. Elting. Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, N.C. 1991. 353 pp., illus. $32.95.

It seems incredible that a war waged nearly two centuries ago can still have the power to excite nationalistic fervour among the historians of the countries involved. Yet the War of 1812 — like the fall of Stuart hopes at Culloden in 1745 and the Highland Clearances that followed, or the battle on the Plains of Abraham in 1759 — still excites that loyalty. And, like Culloden and Quebec, the War of 1812 has had repercussions which are still being felt today.

It was a bungled war fought by amateur militia and second-rate tacticians; ill-equipped armies struggling with a climate and terrain poorly suited to the strategies of the Napoleonic era. Too often the whole affair seems little more than a series of missed opportunities and pointless engagements. Mismanagement and incompetence were matched by moments of semi-mythical valour such as those shown by Perry on Lake Erie or Brock at Queenston Heights. Only when one considers the tremendous contribution of the war, as it was seen in retrospect, in kindling a nationalistic spirit in both the United States and Canada, does one grasp the significance of those three years of bloodshed.

Though largely ignored by British historians, who considered it a small colonial side-action of the Napoleonic Wars, the War of 1812 has been considered by a long line of Canadian and American writers. Some, like Benson J. Lossing in his 1868 work *The Pictorial Field Book of the War of 1812*, were capable of almost ferocious patriotism. This bias has been evident even in some of the most scholarly works.

To his credit, John R. Elting has kept his nationalism to a bare minimum in his new treatment of the war, *Amateurs, To Arms!: A Military History of the War of 1812*. Though unabashedly written from the standpoint of the United States, Elting remains reasonably dispassionate in his stated aim of

Andrew Jackson, 1815

presenting "the military character of the . . . war, its strategy, logistics and tactics." Though his perception is sometimes flawed by a lack of thorough research, the author is honest in his comments and tactical analyses. Whether describing Andrew Jackson — "an explosive commodity, a rather humourless frontier gentleman with a hair-trigger sense of personal honour and an extreme proclivity toward instant reckonings" — or documenting Proctor's bumbling efforts on the Northern front, Elting's comments are perceptive and entertaining.

Still, *Amateurs, To Arms!* is hardly groundbreaking. With Elting's strict reliance upon published works, the book is too often little more than a rather pedestrian re-telling of an oft-told tale. It is written ably enough, in stark and simple prose, and in most cases accurately enough. There are, however, periodic errors in detail. His depictions of the fighting strength and shipbuilding activities on Lake Ontario in 1814, for example, are somewhat confused and flawed. His emphasis is sometimes mystifying as well. The British takeover of Fort Astoria merits a single paragraph, while descriptions of naval actions — with the exception of Cochrane's hit-and-run raids on the Eastern seaboard of the United States — are sketchy at best. Overall, the book hardly supports the publisher's claim of being "the definitive military history" of the War of 1812.

Although Elting's nationalism is not obvious in his descriptions of specific actions, it becomes apparent when the study is seen as a whole. His emphasis is upon the condition and leadership of the American military, just as Stanley's was upon the British and Canadian side in his *The War of 1812: Land Operations*. Evidently, we must wait for an historian who is neither British, Canadian nor American before we can read the final word on the War of 1812.

Studies such as Elting's help to dispel many of the myths surrounding the war. Yet those myths provided a catalyst for the growth of nationalistic feeling on both sides of the 49th Parallel — a nationalism that is apparent even in the viewpoint of authors such as Elting. Wellington concluded that the British had not won the war; the Americans had lost it. But to the American public, it was not "a war of barefaced aggression, incompetently directed, and too often stained by cowardice, stupidity and treason." To the American public it conjures up images of Old Ironsides and the Star-Spangled Banner wav-

ing over Fort McHenry (perhaps the fact that Johnny Horton's song "The Battle of New Orleans" held the #1 spot on the pop charts for six weeks in 1959 demonstrates the American public's interest in the subject, and reflects their perception of it!). Conversely, when Canadians contemplate the image of Brock's meeting with Tecumseh, or of Laura Secord slipping through the American cordon to warn FitzGibbon of American plans to attack his outpost at Beaver Dams, we realize that the war was one of the first things we shared as a nation. It helped to mold us from a colony of European and American immigrants into the nucleus of today's Canada. And one has to wonder, when all is said and done, if what a people perceive the past to be is not equally as important as stark historical fact; in which case, the conscious or unconscious bias of books such as Elting's gains an importance of its own.

Bruce Wishart lives in Brandon, Manitoba. His article, "A Remarkable Fine Ship", appeared in the February/March 1992 issue of "The Beaver".

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MISSING ICONS

By J.M. Bumsted

GRENFELL OF LABRADOR

By Ronald Rompkey. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1991. 350 pp., illus. $35.00.

TIME AND PLACE
The Life and Works of Thomas H. Raddall

Edited by Alan R. Young, Acadiensis Press, Fredericton, 1991. 200 pp. $16.95.

Perhaps more than most nations, Canada has a tendency to lose track of its earlier generations of cultural icons, chiefly because it has so few cultural traditions in which to fit them. The collective memory — or lack of it — seems particularly problematic for individuals of regional prominence, because the Canadian approach to its culture has always had such a strong national bias. Two somewhat forgotten figures from the earlier twentieth century in the Atlantic region — Sir Wilfred Grenfell (1865-1940) and Thomas Raddall (b. 1903) have recently been re-evaluated in two quite different kinds of studies.

For those vaguely familiar with the work of these two men, it may at first glance appear quite surprising to couple them together. But they share more than their close associations with the Atlantic region. Both were born in Imperial England, and both were extremely popular writers in their own times, although in rather different genres. Raddall concentrated on fiction and history, while Grenfell wrote, essentially, about himself, his work as a medical missionary in Labrador, and about Labrador itself in a series of books and articles that takes nearly five pages to list. Both men published autobiographies well-regarded at the time of their publication. In their own way, each tells us a good deal about the cultural milieu in which they operated.

Sir Wilfred Grenfell is rehabilitated in Ronald Rompkey's well-written *Grenfell of Labrador: A Biography*. This study has been extremely well-researched and presented, although the author's decision to produce a conventional biography is perhaps unfortunate. Grenfell's reputation has suffered for several reasons. His life's work in Labrador was executed in a period in which Labrador was essentially a colony of Newfoundland, which in turn was not a part of Canada. As a result, he has been virtually ignored within the Canadian context. Moreover, Grenfell operated in a milieu which is about as politically incorrect as it is possible to get in our time, a point somewhat disguised by the Newfoundland/Labrador context. Grenfell was a "muscular Christian" missionary and social reformer of indisputable imperialistic stamp, the sort of individual the British Empire experienced everywhere at the end of the nineteenth century, paternalistically imposing their doing of good on the benighted natives in the name of imported Christian values. That many of the Labrador "natives" were of English origin scarcely altered the case. Newfoundland itself has never been quite sure how to regard Grenfell, and there was a constant undercurrent of criticism during his lifetime. Not only was Grenfell's performance politically unacceptable in modern eyes, but it was based on a personality considerably at odds with his image as public saint. This last point not only makes Grenfell more human but more accessible, since he joins contemporaries like Mohandas K. Gandhi and Albert Schweitzer in having a private life at considerable conflict with his public image.

Biographer Romkey has chosen not to explore in detail any of the above themes, but has rather preferred to present his protagonist to a modern audience in as conventional a light as possible. He does

so, unfortunately in my view, by ignoring most of the deeper implications of the negative image, rather than by countering them. Thus we are told that Grenfell was completely exonerated by the several investigations (instigated in Newfoundland) into his activities in Labrador rather than offered any deeper analysis of why the authorities in Newfoundland were willing to give credence to the attacks in the first place. Thus we are told that Grenfell was a rotten administrator, but not really what the cumulative effect of this failing was on the mission and its goals. Rompkey does not at all attempt to explore the implications of the almost virtual association in the public mind of the Labrador medical mission with the name of Sir Wilfred Grenfell, which disturbed both its original British backers and American philanthropic organizations like the Rockefeller Foundation, albeit for different reasons. Nor does he appear bothered by the fact that Lady Grenfell did most of the actual writing of her husband's later books, although this point doubtless fits into the overall pattern of difficulty that Grenfell had in relating to his nuclear family, briefly noted but never explored in this volume.

Rompkey quite sensibly chooses to portray Grenfell as a social reformer, although this decision does not really resolve the problem of context. In terms of Labrador or even Newfoundland society, Grenfell's reformism appears to cut more against the grain than it does if he were placed firmly in the larger world of moral reformers within the Empire of his time. Reading Rompkey's biography in tandem with a work like Mariana Valverde's *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (1991), for example, is extremely enlightening. The link between Grenfell and English-Canadian moral reform could well be symbolized by the figure of William Lyon Mackenzie King, who was in his early career a mainstream social gospeller and who figures prominently in Grenfell's life as a principal Canadian supporter. Perhaps more than most figures in Newfoundland's history before Confederation in 1949, Sir Wilfred Grenfell cannot be dealt with solely in regional terms.

If Grenfell is presented in a conventional biography, Thomas Raddall becomes the subject of an academic symposium, held at Acadia University in 1990. The result is a collection of papers edited by Alan R. Young, entitled *Time & Place: The Life and Works of Thomas H. Raddall*. Curiously, no bibliography of the author's works is included in this volume. As an

Wilfred Grenfell

author, Raddall presents an interesting problem for academics. His work was extremely well regarded by his contemporaries, although Raddall had considerable difficulty in making a living in Canada as a full-time writer. Nevertheless, several novels were best-sellers and he won a number of literary awards. Despite this record, his place in the canon of CanLit is hardly secure, and despite some obvious strengths he is often dismissed as a writer of regional historical novels. These papers attempt to explore and re-evaluate Raddall's standing as a writer. The result, as might have been expected, is fairly mixed.

None of the scholars whose work is reprinted here succeed in revising what editor Young summarizes as "the predominant critical view of Raddall's fiction in Canada", that he is "a fine craftsman, tale-teller, and stylist but his work is simply not as important and interesting as that of other Canadian writers." Several authors suggest that part of Raddall's problem lies in his choice of genre. Historical romance may convey a strong sense of place, but its other limitations are fairly obvious, particularly in an age of post-modernism. It becomes abundantly clear that Raddall suffers from the unfashionability of his insistence on what could perhaps be characterized as narrative romantic realism. Some attempt is made, chiefly by Donna E. Smyth, to insist that Raddall in his historical fiction achieved more than mere romance. Place — Raddall wrote almost exclusively about Nova Scotia — is never directly considered as a limiting factor, although the author's sense of it permeates almost every essay in this collection. The overall impact of these essays, however, probably does not appreciably alter Raddall's place in the canon.

In the end, literary (and perhaps intellectual) fashion combines with some demonstrable problems to keep Raddall in his place. To some unmeasurable extent, Raddall is the victim of his own efforts to transcend the limitations of his approach to fiction. The difficulty with many of Raddall's better novels is less their narrative construction or their romantic overtones, argue several scholars in these pages, but their inability to present their protagonists, particularly women, in a convincing way. His efforts to portray women sensitively, both Helen Buss and Michele Lacombe demonstrate fairly convincingly, are simply not very credible. Raddall might have been better off if he had stuck with what he did best — as other writers of narrative romance like John Buchan did — instead of attempting more. Moreover, as Barry Moody points out in a sensitive and sympathetic essay, there

is a curious gap at the heart of Raddall's work, which moves from historical fiction of the eighteenth century to novels dealing with contemporary Nova Scotia without ever considering the period in between. The result is a failure of overall vision — historical and personal — that cannot be compensated for by Raddall's impressive efforts at historical versimilitude discussed knowledgeably by a number of contributors, notably Allen Penney and Clary Croft. Moody's insight is never fully explored, nor is it taken up by any of the other contributors, although the problem of vision is clearly at the heart of everyone's critique of Raddall. As Chris Ferns adds, for example, Raddall's fiction typically ends with resolution rather than in the currently more acceptable uncertainty and questioning.

In the course of its proceedings, the Thomas Raddall Symposium touched on a number of fascinating cross-disciplinary questions, particularly the relationship between history and fiction, the problem of gender in fiction, and the meaning of regionalism. Readers interested in these issues will perhaps benefit from this work even more than those concerned with Thomas Raddall or the Nova Scotia about which he has written.

Sir Wilfred Grenfell had probably been neglected more because of his regional associations than has Thomas Raddall, but both men deserve a wider audience. Perhaps these studies will help provide one.

J.M. Bumsted is Professor of History at St. John's College, University of Manitoba.

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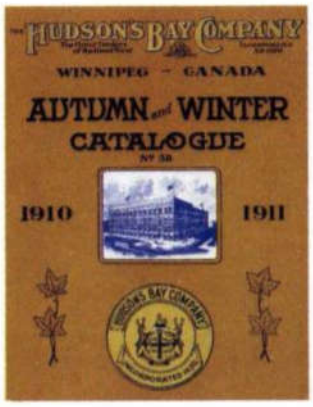

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Ethel Gillingham: The First Thanksgiving

Canadians hardly concern themselves with the origin of our Thanksgiving holiday, or they readily accept the American "Puritan" version as the source. Yet we have our own Thanksgiving heritage.

Our Thanksgiving had its beginnings 45 years before the Pilgrim celebrations. In the year 1578 the English explorer Martin Frobisher brought an original Thanksgiving service to these shores.

That Canadian service, on Baffin Island, was the first recorded Christian communion to be held in North America.

On this third Martin Frobisher voyage to search for a passage to Cathay, his orders included gold mining and colonization in that land, named "Meta Incognita" by Queen Elizabeth I. At the queen's request, the expedition included a chaplain, so that men of his "fifteen goodships" should be "exercised in religion". This Somerset vicar, Robert Woolfall, led the first communion, said to be a "true thanksgiving".

They had much to be thankful for. On their journeys, Frobisher's company endured such disasters as "swift and terrible tempests" and being "unmercifully battered and threatened with walls, mountains and bulwarks of floating ice". The men celebrated their safety with gunfire and prayer.

George Best, the on-the-spot historian, says, "we cast ourselves into a ring" on the rock. They were a mix of labourers, sailors and miners; there were artificers; soldiers and some gentlemen. Also the presence of the on-board baker suggests the comfort of communion bread.

Robert Woolfall led them in the ancient and familiar communion service. Then they "highlye praysed God, and altogither vppon their knees gaue hym due, humble and harty thanckes."

Later, it seems, they "went to dynner". No doubt the travellers feasted on the meagre supplies remaining from their voyage, and the local wildlife and fish.

'We cast ourselves into a ring'

Martin Frobisher

Martin Frobisher, Yorkshireman, must have been an interesting personality. Although at one time engaged in a little piracy, he was a man of valour, and a strict taskmaster. While his extreme bravery "caused him to be too willfull", his top priority was devotion to duty and the cause of his queen. Despite incidents with the native people, Martin and his company established a rapport with them before returning to England.

For most Canadians that first Thanksgiving is an obscure beginning, but on 13 September 1978, a service was held in (then) Frobisher Bay to commemorate the 400 year celebration of the event. It was attended by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Canadian bishops, and many guests, including a descendant of Frobisher. Bryan Pearson, native mayor at that time, says, "the whole affair was very exciting to us".

Thanksgiving is universal. The annual harvest has been the focus, celebrated with great enthusiasm since before recorded history. And early Canadian settlers found the Indians had their own harvest celebrations. Just as Frobisher's men gave thanks for their immediate blessings, so we do today for a myriad benefits.

Since 1957, our official Canadian Thanksgiving has been observed on the second Monday in October.

So, as you give thanks on 12 October for our Canadian bounty, remember that brave group who celebrated our first Thanksgiving, and especially Martin Frobisher, whose story reminds us of our identity, and our history.

Ethel Gillingham lives in West Vancouver, British Columbia.

Into the Unknown With Henry Sinclair

Robert McGhee's article "Before Columbus: Early European Visitors to the Shores of the 'New World'" [*The Beaver*, June/July 1992] is rich in detail about the Irish legends and the Norse, and justly mentions visits from Portuguese and English Grand Banks fishermen in the fifteenth century.

I have two comments which may be of interest to readers of *The Beaver*. Firstly, the naming of Vinland may be unrelated to the berries and vines they found there. On very old maps "Finland" appears as "Vinland." Some of the Vikings, who were familiar with this country of forests and lakes, may have seen the resemblance of Newfoundland's landscape and flora to those of that "Vinland" and named the new land accordingly.

Secondly, a history of pre-Columbian trans-Atlantic crossings does not seem complete without reference to Lord Henry Sinclair's 1398 voyage to Nova Scotia.

The chief source on Lord Henry's deeds is the "Zeno Narrative." A packet of letters written between 1390 and 1404 by Nicolo Zeno and his son Antonio to Nicolo's brother Carlo Zeno, a Venetian admiral, was published by a descendant in 1558. Because the editor embellished Antonio Zeno's map, misspelled Sinclair's name, and discarded the original letters after transcribing them, some scholars have doubted the validity of the Zeno Narrative as a historical document.

Henry Sinclair (1345-1400), Baron of Roslin (Scotland) and Earl of Orkney (Norway), conquered the Shetlands for Norway in 1390, using ships mounted with movable guns in the newly invented Venetian manner.

Following up on the tale of an Orkney fisherman who had returned after a 25-year absence from a remote western island called Estotiland, Lord Henry fitted out an expedition to visit that island, which corresponds to Newfoundland in size, shape and location. He found people speaking ten different languages in Estotiland's northern peninsula, and communicated with an Icelander. Sailing along the east coast, he found the natives hostile. He continued in a southwesterly direction and landed on Cape Canso, the most easterly cape of mainland Nova Scotia. After walking westwards for several days he found a smoking hole at the bottom of a hill, and a brook of pitch flowing down to the sea. This feature occurs near Pictou, Nova Scotia, in an area where coal seams come to the surface and where coal mining continues today.

Since Antonio Zeno returned to the Orkneys at the end of the summer with all the ships and half the men, his letters to his uncle do not tell us what happened next to Lord Henry and his remaining force: but the Glooscap legend does. This legend corresponds so closely to the Zeno Narrative, that it almost certainly describes the same expedition. For instance, Glooscap landed at Canso and visited Pictou with its spring of pitch. The legend recounts further events in sufficient detail that we can determine where the expedition wintered and along which routes it travelled.

Henry Sinclair built a ship and returned to the Orkneys in 1399, where he died the following year in battle, defending his lands against the English.

A.C. Bonga,
Fredericton,
New Brunswick.

At Coburg

I read with a great deal of interest the article on Emily Stowe by Sydell Waxman [*The Beaver*, April/May 1992].

The medical school from which Emily's daughter, Augusta, graduated was indeed the Toronto School of Medicine. It is interesting to note that the Toronto School of Medicine was the medical faculty of Victoria University which was situated in Coburg, Ontario, at that time. At that time and up to 1892, when Victoria University federated with the University of Toronto and moved to Toronto, Victoria in Coburg had a medical faculty with two branches: one in Toronto and the other in Montreal. By 1892 Victoria had graduated 963 students in medicine.

Ernest G. Clarke
Victoria University, Toronto.

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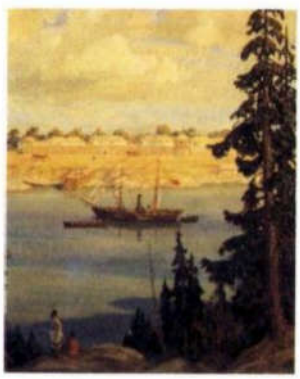

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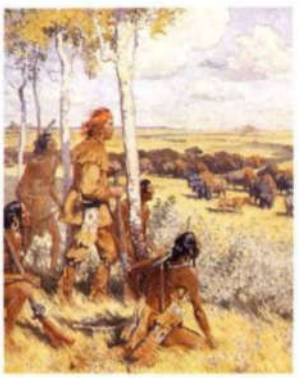

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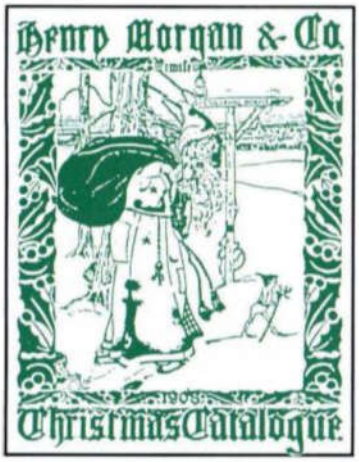

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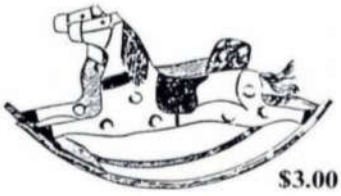

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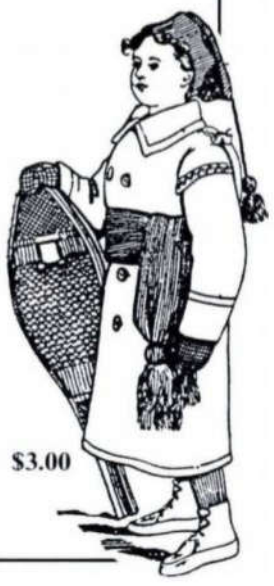

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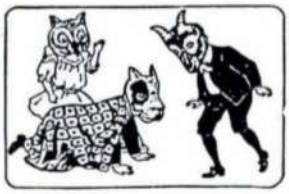

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Oxford House, 1911

You may be interested to learn that the "missionary" at Oxford House in "By Canoe to York Factory" [*The Beaver*, August/September 1992] was John W. Niddrie, my wife's great uncle. Born in Scotland in 1863, he came to Canada (for the second time) in 1885 and to the West the same year. After participating in the final construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, in 1889 he moved to the Morley Mission, Alberta, NWT, where he served as lay missionary and teacher. In 1910 the Methodist Church posted him to Oxford House where he met the author of the above-titled article.

"We found the Oxford House Indians splendid people," he wrote. "Indeed the five years we spent at that Mission is a green spot in our memory." Following his sojourn at Oxford House, he was appointed to what he called "A Roving Commission," which included serving Island Lake, Sandy Lake and Deer Lake. In 1920 he was transferred to Berens River, where he served the rest of his life as resident missionary and superintendent over a wide area. Perhaps the fact that in 1911 he was not yet "Rev." is why Campbell uses quotation marks around "missionary." However, the Methodist Church ordained him in 1915.

The Rev. John W. Niddrie, who never married, retired at Berens River in 1938; died and was buried there in 1940.

John W. Chalmers,
Edmonton, Alberta.

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Ignored

Since beginning to receive *The Beaver* a couple of years ago, I have become an avid "cover to cover" reader. It is full of educational nuggets of our Canadian history.

In volume 72:2, April/May, 1992, there is a fascinating story of "Emily Stowe: Feminist and Healer". Although chronologically she was probably the first woman to practice medicine, albeit without a license, apparently beginning shortly after 1868, her story runs counter to that of Jennie (Jenny) Kidd Trout, who was honoured by the Canada Post Corporation on a stamp issued on 15 March 1991. It is true that Dr. Trout was noted to be the first *licensed* woman physician in Canada, apparently obtaining her license shortly after graduation in 1875, whereas Dr. Stowe was not officially licensed until 1880.

Could it be that the Canada Post Corporation ignored an illegally practicing physician, the illegality being due to the straitlaced Canadian College of Physicians and Surgeons, rather than giving credit to a lady who was rendering good medical care to patients? How times have changed!

C. Ronald Stephen, M.D., C.M.,
Chesterfield, Missouri, U.S.A.

The Amazing Signor Farini

Go West Young Woman

Mackenzie King Holds Court

THE BEAVER
December/January

The First People of America

If aboriginal people wrote the history of Canada, what would the history of Canada look like? We don't really know, but we may be starting to find out. Two recently published books, one a thick text, the other a slim argument, suggest that the native history of *their* native land is beginning to appear.

At first glance, the thick book seems to be a textbook of a conventional sort. *Canada's First Nations*, published in the spring of 1992, is a survey history, narrating events in chronological order "from earliest times" to the present and closing with a full hundred pages of endnotes and a fifty-page bibliography. It is pretty clearly destined for use by university history classes, and its author, Olive Dickason, is indeed a professor of history at the University of Alberta. What is immediately striking about her career, in fact, is not its aboriginal side but the unusual path she has taken in becoming — and remaining — a history professor.

Dickason began as a journalist, not an historian, and for 24 years she wrote for newspapers in Regina, Winnipeg, Montreal, and Toronto. Only then, a single parent with her children nearly grown, did she launch her university studies in history at the University of Ottawa. She was in her fifties before she completed her Ph.D. and began to teach. Within a decade, she became a reluctant celebrity when in 1985 the University of Alberta declared that its mandatory retirement rules meant her teaching career was over.

"I had been encouraged to go on and make this commitment of time and energy, at great expense to me and to the state as well, to earn my doctorate," she says. "Now I was just getting started — and in history you need years to let things simmer. Things were just starting to come together, and they wanted me to retire."

Just months before, Alberta had enacted new laws to conform to

Olive Dickason

Canada's new Charter of Rights and Freedoms. That created legal ground for a fundamental challenge to mandatory retirement. "Denying rights at a certain age — it's just absurd when you think about it," Dickason says. She took her case to the courts. She won and she lost but, as appeals went forward, she was able to keep teaching until she herself was ready to retire. Meanwhile her case proceeded, and it is now being considered in the Supreme Court of Canada. When the justices bring down their decision, *Dickason* v. *University of Alberta* may well become the fundamental ruling on whether Canadians can legally be obliged to retire at 65.

That doesn't sound much like an aboriginal Canadian's career, and indeed, when Dickason was growing up in Manitoba, her closest contact with aboriginals came when she attended the Oblate Convent at St. Charles along with many native and Métis children. She was an adult before she learned of her mother's mixed-blood heritage. "Those native connections have been buried for a lot of families," she says, and she felt some family opposition when she began to explore her Métis heritage.

She still has not sorted out all the genealogy, but she has taken her Métis inheritance seriously for a long time. Today aboriginal colleagues point to her as truly Métis and something more: a scholar trained in the mainstream who is actually conversant with both cultures and able to appreciate aboriginal values and perspectives.

Dickason started her historical studies without any determination to focus on aboriginal history. It was the way history texts and professors in the late 1960s treated aboriginal issues that galvanized her. "I thought the treatment of natives was terrible!" she declares. "All that talk of bloodthirsty savages just didn't make sense." She soon decided that arguing without evidence was a waste of time. "You have to do the work," she says, and although the university in those days doubted that aboriginal history was real history, she proceeded to grad-school studies.

"I have a penchant for beginnings," she says, and much of her scholarly work has focussed on the earliest contacts between Europeans and Amerindians. "That contact period was absolutely crucial. At the beginning, things could have gone

any way, but once European attitudes were fixed, they became very slow to change. France's royal charter to Jacques Cartier declares that aboriginal peoples had no right to hold territory, and it's exactly the same in [last year's B.C. Supreme Court ruling on] the Gitksan-Wet'suwet'en case."

Meanwhile she was teaching aboriginal history, but student interest ran far ahead of the teaching tools. Dickason found herself teaching without a text, and grumbling about the lack of one. A publisher's offer and a Rockefeller Foundation grant for a year of study at Chicago's Newberry Library ("the best place in North America for Amerindian materials") plunged her into the writing of *Canada's First Nations*.

"It was a learning process. I thought I knew native history!" As a small example of nuances she came to appreciate, she cites the newcomers' expansion toward the Rocky Mountains. "The native peoples had their own networks there, and they didn't want foreign disruption. Especially in the southern areas. The Blackfoot routes were simply closed, and that affected the whole pattern of westward expansion."

A recurring theme in Dickason's book is the importance of aboriginal participation at every stage of Canadian history. It became the source of her title. "Co-operation was essential," she argues. "The country was just impossible without the groundwork, and that's why the Amerindians are founding nations, even though Confederation ignored them."

These are important themes and sharply contrary to what most of us have learned. Yet with the exciting prospect of having in hand an aboriginal history of Canada actually written by a Métis historian, *Canada's First Nations* can be just a little disappointing. In many ways, it has the same organization as mainstream histories that follow the European colonial settlers and builders of Canada, and its chronology is guided by familiar mileposts: Anglo-French rivalries, fur trade empires, the War of 1812, and government decisions from 1763's Royal Proclamation to Thomas Berger's Royal Commission of 1977.

Is that adequate? In recent years the literary community has been struggling with "appropriation of voice". Native writers have denounced the imposition of white attitudes upon native experience. At the same time, they produced spectacular evidence — like the plays of Thompson Highway — of brilliant and popular aboriginal writing that could never be mistaken for anyone else's work.

Historians have largely been absent from that debate. Even as great numbers of white scholars began to write seriously about aboriginal history, they seemed to absorb aboriginal subjects into traditional academic procedures far removed from the reality of most aboriginal people's lives. Compared to the literary ferment, *Canada's First Nations* seems a very cautious first step toward staking an aboriginal claim to history. It is hard to say just what other organization Dickason might have used, but one tries to imagine a history somehow shaped less by the Europeans and more by the evolutions of the Haida nation, and the Dene nation, the great Iroquoian confederacies, and other aboriginal societies with their own rich, deep histories.

Asked about the apparently European framework of her book, Dickason agrees unapologetically. "You can only go one step at a time," she explains. "For a totally native history, the material is there. But the perspective wouldn't be understood. It is too big a leap.

What she has tried instead, she says, is to accept a more familiar framework, but "to reverse the perspective of the standard history." That means not just looking clearly at the consequences of colonizers' actions upon aboriginal peoples. In fact, it changes the point of many of our historical stories.

For example? Pierre Radisson had gone pretty much unchallenged for three hundred years as the prime mover in the founding of the Hudson's Bay Company. Reversing the perspective, Dickason begins to examine how the destruction of the Huron confederacy in 1649 affected more northerly hunter-gatherers. They had long been used to trading

Pierre Radisson and friends, 1660, by C.W. Jefferys. Was Pierre less of a prime mover than was supposed?

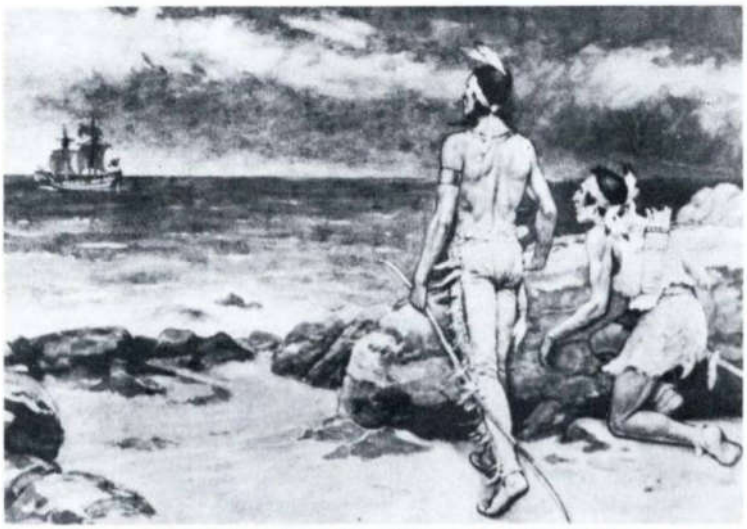
with the corn-growing Hurons. With the Huron network shattered, Dickason argues, it was those nations, rather than a few enterprising *coureurs de bois*, who shifted the fur-for-provisions trade away from the Great Lakes. "It's much deeper and more profound than has been recognized. The Northern people turned the trade to Hudson Bay," says Dickason. In the reversed perspective she offers, Radisson, King Charles, the Gentlemen Adventurers — and the whole course of fur-driven colonial history — just responded. In recent history, the revival of aboriginal politics and culture may be another example where mainstream Canadian society will react to, more than drive, events.

Has that process of changing perspectives farther to go? Probably. But Dickason doubts a reliance on the traditional wisdom of the elders will be what drives aboriginal history ahead. "The elders are not so reliable, at least in the Western sense. And history is a Western phenomenon. It is a different level of knowledge — and this is the dilemma. Native peoples have to build up their historical-legal identity in ways the world can recognize.

Dickason suspects the future may lie with aboriginal historians who have mastered Western historical techniques. And as one of several examples, she mentions Georges Sioui, the author of *For an Amerindian Autohistory*, the slim volume that is appearing almost simultaneously with Dickason's 600-page survey.

Sioui, a professor at the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College in Regina, thinks he may be the first aboriginal Canadian ever to earn a Ph.D. in history, and his path to professorship in history has been at least as unusual as Dickason's.

Sioui is a Huron. Disdaining that French term, he prefers to call himself Wendat, but he is descended directly from people of the nation that was broken up in 1649. Sioui himself grew up in Lorette, near Quebec City, where a small community has preserved the Huron identity ever since. He describes his parents as coming from "traditional families. They promoted our integration into schools, and at the same time they prevented us from adhering to values other than our own."



A popular theme for painters: Indians about to be visited.

Sioui's own activity first focussed on political action through aboriginal journalism, rights campaigns — and another celebrated legal case. In 1982 he and three others were arrested for cutting saplings in Quebec's Parc des Laurentides in defiance of provincial law but in keeping with a 1760 Huron treaty. *Regina* v. *Sioui*, which ended with their Supreme Court victory in 1990, may one day seem as fundamental in native treaty law as the Dickason case on mandatory retirement.

But Sioui's interests were shifting away from an exclusive emphasis on rights to what he sees as an aboriginal responsibility. "We speak of rights," he says, "but we are not likely to be able to claim them unless we can demonstrate our contribution. We can point out the wealth of our culture, the philosophical contribution we can make, the change of values we can assist." He decided that scholarly history is one way to do that.

Sioui is convinced that 500 years of European onslaught have not broken or even changed native fidelity to the Sacred Circle of Life. The Great Circle symbolizes the universal interdependence and equality of all living things and the Earth itself, and Sioui sees it as basis of the common outlook shared by all Amerindian cultures. Now that the West's commitment to conquering nature through technological progress and social stratification has brought the world to crisis, argues Sioui, the time is ripe to proclaim Amerindian values. After five hundred years of Amerindian culture on the defensive, he writes in *For an Amerindian Autohistory* that it is time for "the Americanization of the World."

As the organizing theme for writing the history of North America, Sioui's argument in *For an Amerindian Autohistory* is radically different from mainstream notions of what history is about. And Sioui does not talk the way professors might be expected to. When asked about his move from Quebec (where he completed his Ph.D. at Université Laval and wrote his book in French) to his new teaching post in Saskatchewan, he replies, "My

parents told me we're one large family, and that we had a responsibility to all native nations because our own felt the European impact so early. I am glad to be in the West. There is an important spiritual source here." It is hardly the usual language of an academic career.

Yet, when asked about some future kind of history organized around a truly aboriginal chronology, Georges Sioui sounds much like Olive Dickason. "It won't happen that way. We will do somewhat like Olive for a long time. We'll take the accepted patterns of research, writing, explaining." Sioui sees Dickason as a pathbreaker, but he is also convinced there is lots of room for non-aboriginal historians to write aboriginal history. "White intellectuals have a lot of convincing of their own people to do, so I'm not against white people doing native history."

Sioui became an historian because he thinks (in Dickason's words) you have to do the work. He sees the Western scientific tradition of history as providing the language in which to express an Amerindian message. "What kept us from corresponding between cultures actually permitted some 'leaders' to exploit us by talking about problems, about victims." Sioui prefers communication, and he sees history as the way to communicate. "With more people not so scared to embark, and to strike a compromise between our tradition and scientific language, we'll be able to correspond more and more. I'm positive."

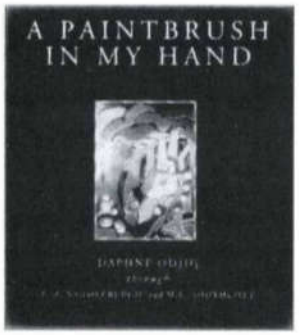
Olive Dickason is positive too. She is amazed at the renaissance of Amerindian society that has taken place in the last quarter century — and also at the change in historical writing about aboriginal issues. But reversing the historical consensus, she says, compares to manoeuvering the *Queen Mary* into harbour. "To change our educational apparatus is a huge, slow process. It may take a generation — and that's optimistic."

Judging by their books, Sioui leans to the philosophical search for the great lesson of history, while Dickason thrives on the historian's endless exploration of the precise details that modify other precise details. But on the situation of aboriginal history, she and Sioui seem to share the same long perspective. Their 1992 books may be important less for how far they have come than for what they point toward. They are signposts to fascinating histories yet to come. And worth waiting for. ♦

Olive Patricia Dickason's "Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from the Earliest Times" is published by McClelland and Stewart. Georges E. Sioui's "For an Amerindian Autohistory", which first appeared in French in 1989, will be published by McGill-Queen's University Press in November 1992.

*

Christopher Moore is the co-author, with Janet Lunn, of "The Story of Canada", a general history for young people illustrated by Alan Daniel and published this autumn by Key Porter Books and Lester Publishing.



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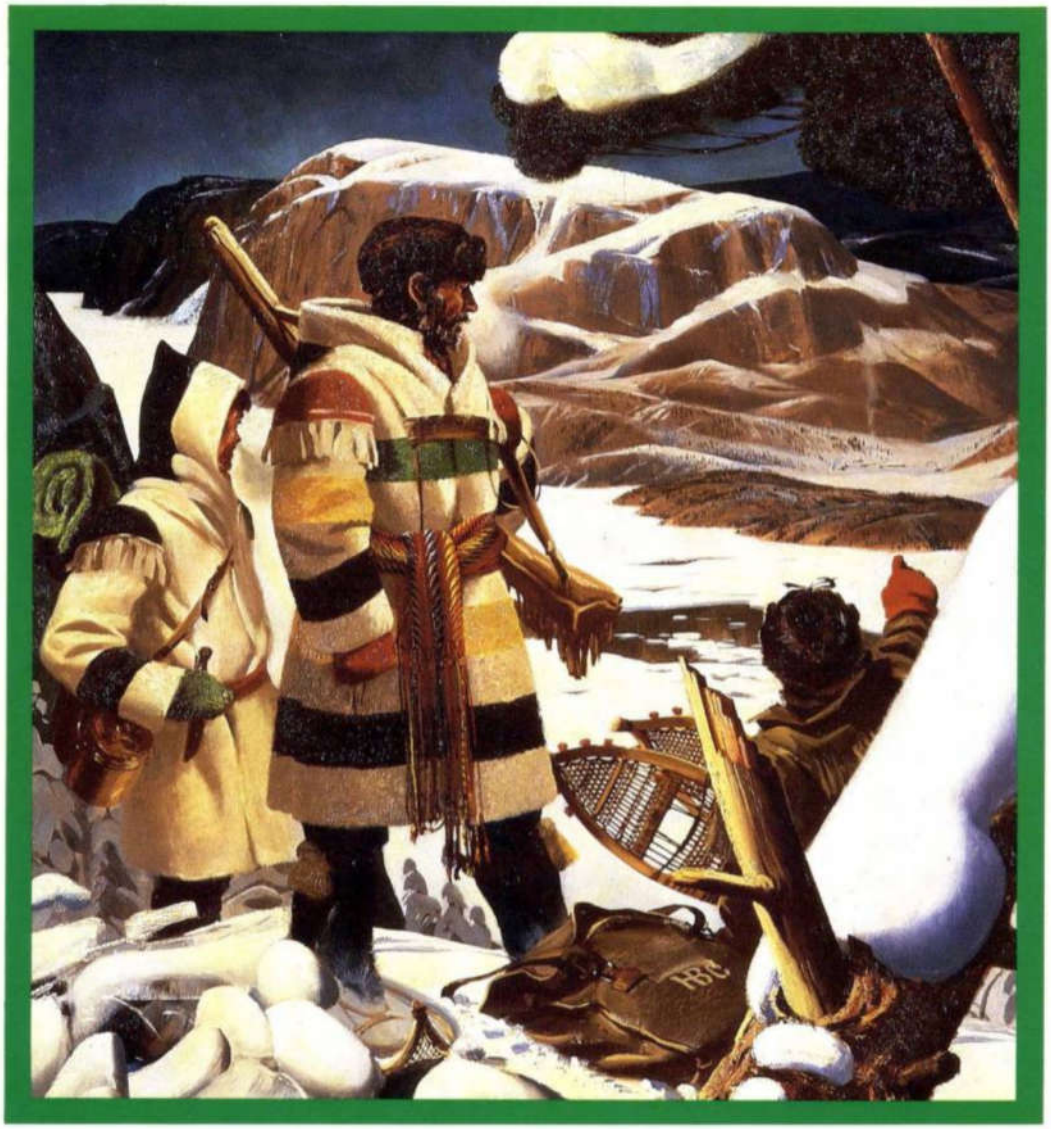

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